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# HUSKERS

## ILLUSTRATED

OCTOBER 31, 2009 • VOLUME 29 • NO. 14

### COLUMNS

**4 FROM THE EDITOR** by Aaron Babcock  
Going Green

**12 READING THE FIELD** by Joe Ganz  
Offense must continue to develop leaders

**19 STATE OF THE HUSKERS** by Curt McKeever  
Offense needs outside the box thinking

**37 DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS** by John Talman  
Recruiting, rankings product of research

**46 THE FINAL WORD** by Mike Babcock  
Crick's monster game punishes Baylor

### SPECIAL FEATURES

**14 HOMETOWN HERO**

**17 CATCHING UP WITH RICK BERNIS**

**30 FAMILY FRIENDS**

### DON'T MISS

**6 2MINUTE DRILL**

**16 10 QUESTIONS**

**21 TURNING POINT**

**22 GAME NOTES**

**27 SCORE PREDICTIONS**

**28 GAME STATS**

**29 OPPONENT PREVIEW**

**34 RECRUITING**

**44 FROM THE ARCHIVES**

**45 CROSSWORD**

#### NEXT ISSUE

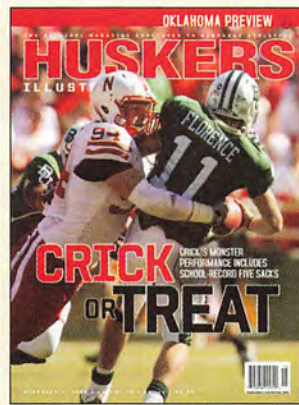
Volume 29, Issue 16 recapping the Oklahoma game will be mailed on Monday, Nov. 9. Check for updates at [huskersillustrated.com](http://huskersillustrated.com).

## HUSKERS

### ILLUSTRATED

#### ON THE COVER

Jared Crick takes down Nick Florence for one of his school record five sacks. Crick finished the game with 13 tackles, including 10 solo, 7 tackles for loss and a fumble recover. His seven tackles for loss also tied a school record. *Photo by Scott Bruhn.*





## GOING GREEN

### Green first freshman QB to start in 17 years



**DID SATURDAY MARK** the beginning of the Cody Green era?

Years from now, if Green blossoms into a heralded Husker signal caller, the stats won't show it as any kind of monumental performance. But it will go down as his first start. And his first win.

It was a historic start by default, rather than performance, as it represented the first start for a Cornhusker freshman quarterback in 17 years. The last? Tommie Frazier on Oct. 24, 1992 in Columbia.

For what it's worth, Frazier's first win was eerily similar – a 10 point win on the road against a bad team. Frazier led No. 8 Nebraska to a 34-24 win without eye-popping numbers – 9 completions on 20 attempts for 157 yards and 14 carries for 77 yards and a touchdown.

Green, a 6-foot-4, 220-pounder, earned his start in Waco, Texas, just 200 miles from his hometown of Dayton. Green's numbers weren't pretty. He was 12-for-21 for 128 yards and one interception, with 48 yards coming on a single completion to Niles Paul. He also rushed for 48 yards on eight carries.

But this game was not about stats. After two straight losses, it was about

finding a way to win.

Green won't serve as a magic pill for all that ails the Husker offense. This team's offensive ailments begin in the trenches, continue in a dinged up backfield and extend to an inconsistent receiving corps. But his ability to run the ball gives Nebraska an extra dimension. Obviously, he needs to develop and learn from his mistakes.

With his start, Green's development jumps into overdrive. He will continue to fight for the starting job. Lee will likely see the field again soon, if not before the next game is over.

While history will determine if Saturday marked the beginning of the Cody Green era, it did showcase Nebraska's emerging talent. Five freshmen made significant contributions. In addition to Green, Dontrayevous Robinson led the team in rushing, Eric Martin blocked a punt, Justin Blatchford returned the block punt for a touchdown and Khiry Cooper earned a start at wide receiver.

Collectively, they could mark the start of a new era. **N**

*Send me your comments or story ideas to [aaron@huskersillustrated.com](mailto:aaron@huskersillustrated.com).*

## HUSKERS

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## BURDEN OF HISTORY

**E**ven after the Cornhuskers' 9-7 loss to Iowa State at Memorial Stadium, **NDAMUKONG SUH** remained optimistic. "I still believe our goals are still intact," the senior defensive tackle said.

Among their goals was to win the Big 12 North Division and play in the conference championship game at Arlington, Texas, on Dec. 5. Nebraska last played in the title game in 2006.

Among North Division teams, Nebraska and Colorado are tied for the most Big 12 championship game appearances, each having played for the conference title four times.

Given back-to-back losses at home already, and Oklahoma up next, the Cornhuskers would have to go against the trend of history to make a fifth trip to the title game this season.

► Only once has a team in either Big 12 division lost to a divisional opponent at home and still advanced to the title game. Colorado lost to Nebraska (30-3) at Boulder but won the North Division title in 2005.

► And only once has a team in either division lost as many as two home games and still played for the championship. Again that team was Colorado, which lost to Oklahoma State (42-14) and Texas (31-7) at Folsom Field in 2004.

In addition, only one team in either division has ever advanced

to the Big 12 championship game with a 4-4 conference record – also Colorado in 2004. Iowa State also finished 4-4 that season, but the Cyclones lost head-to-head with Colorado, 19-14 at Boulder.

In fact, teams with 5-3 conference records have advanced to the title game only twice, both of them in the North Division, Colorado in 2005 and Missouri last season.

### BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH-UPS

YEAR	NORTH DIVISION	SOUTH DIVISION	RESULT
1996	<b>NEBRASKA (8-0)</b>	Texas (6-2)	Texas 37-27
1997	<b>NEBRASKA (8-0)</b>	Texas A&M (6-2)	<b>NEBRASKA 54-15</b>
1998	Kansas State (8-0)	Texas A&M (7-1)	Texas A&M 36-33
1999	<b>NEBRASKA (7-1)*</b>	Texas (6-2)	<b>NEBRASKA 22-6</b>
2000	Kansas State (6-2)*	Oklahoma (8-0)	Oklahoma 27-24
2001	Colorado (7-1)*	Texas (7-1)	Colorado 39-37
2002	Colorado (7-1)	Oklahoma (6-2)*	Oklahoma 29-7
2003	Kansas State (6-2)	Oklahoma (8-0)	Kansas State 35-7
2004	Colorado (4-4)*	Oklahoma (8-0)	Oklahoma 42-3
2005	Colorado (5-3)	Texas (8-0)	Texas 70-3
2006	<b>NEBRASKA (6-2)</b>	Oklahoma (7-1)	Oklahoma 21-7
2007	Missouri (7-1)*	Oklahoma (6-2)	Oklahoma 38-17
2008	Missouri (5-3)*	Oklahoma (7-1)*	Oklahoma 62-21

\*Indicates tie for divisional title, representative determined by head-to-head results, except in South Division 2008, when BCS standings were used to break a three-way tie



# 2MinuteDrill



**JARED STEPS UP:** With offenses often double-teaming **NDAMUKONG SUH**, sophomore defensive tackle **JARED CRICK** has had to step up. "Jared is a helluva a player," Suh said. "I'm excited to see how much more he can grow. He's a young pup in understanding his role, which I think he understands real well at this point. He's gotten a tremendous amount of attention, and I think he's ready to grow and expand on that."

"These coaches are allowing him to do that."

## DO IT OVER, DO IT THE SAME

That **CODY GREEN** is playing this season is a function not only of his athletic ability but also of his having finished high school early. He enrolled for classes at Nebraska in January and participated in spring practice. Has he second-guessed the decision to leave high school early?

"I tell everybody if I had the chance to do it over again, I'd do the exact same thing because honestly, for a quarterback, there's no way that I could come in here during the summer and try to compete for a back-up or starting job," he said following the opener.

"There's no way, absolutely no way. There's too much stuff that you need to learn, and you need to learn it quick. And so me coming in here during the spring and actually getting to go through spring ball, just viewing it from a player's perspective, it helped me tremendously."

## INSIDE AND OUTSIDE, LOOKING IN

**ZAC LEE** was prepared for the quarterback controversy created by media and fans, at least to the point of understanding the situation when he came to Nebraska from San Francisco City College. "Really, when I first got here, I kind of looked at it like you're in a fish bowl," he said.

"You have to just put everything on the backburner, even the positives. If you look at the positives and start reading your own stuff, you get caught up in it. You have to keep yourself focused on what's going on around here."

"No one (else) knows what's going on in our meeting room and practices; only we know. That's how it is. I've just tried to keep myself focused on what I can control and stay focused and just go from there. It's tough, but you have to do it for your own mental sanity, really."



## HAVE A COKE (NOT)

Former Pittsburgh Steelers Hall of Fame defensive tackle **"MEAN" JOE GREENE** was at Nebraska the week of the Iowa State game, scouting for the Steelers, and spoke to the team.

"It was a great privilege for our guys to be able to meet a Hall of Famer," said defensive coordinator and defensive line coach **CARL PELINI**. "He had some words of wisdom for our guys."

Greene's message? "How to be a great teammate, how to be accountable to your team by preparing every day, mentally and physically; that was kind of the basis of his message," Pelini said. "He kind of pointed to that as the secret of the Steelers' success in the 70s."

Greene, the NFL defensive player of the year in 1972 and 1974, played on four Super Bowl championship teams. He also was familiar to non-football fans because of his appearance in television commercials for Coca-Cola. So, Pelini was asked if he was going to offer Greene a Coke.

"I don't think I'm allowed to say that because we're a Pepsi school," Pelini said.



# 2MinuteDrill



## PLAYING CAREER FINISHED

**BLAKE LAWRENCE** wore a special helmet this season in order to play football, despite a problem with concussions – the junior linebacker suffered four in an 18-month period.

Because of the long-term risks associated with continuing to play, however, Lawrence has decided to step aside, after discussing his situation with coaches, doctors and family.

“Playing football at the University of Nebraska has been one of my greatest accomplishments, and I will always be proud to say I am a Cornhusker,” Lawrence said in a statement.

He started the first two games this season at weakside linebacker (and two last season,

including the Gator Bowl) before giving way to senior **PHILLIP DILLARD**.

## GETTING TO KNOW HIM

Before Nebraska recruits a quarterback, offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach **SHAWN WATSON** wants to get to know him. And that can be accomplished before the quarterback arrives. Early this season, Watson was asked when he realized Green could handle everything expected of him. “At the very beginning, to be honest with you, when I had him in quarterback camp a long time ago,” Watson said before Green got in a game. “He’s football smart. He gets it. He really does.”

## SIDELINES



### GOOD DUDE ALEX

Junior place-kicker **ALEX HENERY** doesn’t have a big ego. Most would agree with that. Early in the season, quarterback **ZAC LEE** was asked what kind of guy Henery was. Henery worked at a golf course during the summer, and “he honestly looks like he fits in a little better there,” said Lee. “He’s a real unassuming, good guy. I don’t think he realizes he’d kind of a little superstar, just a good dude.”

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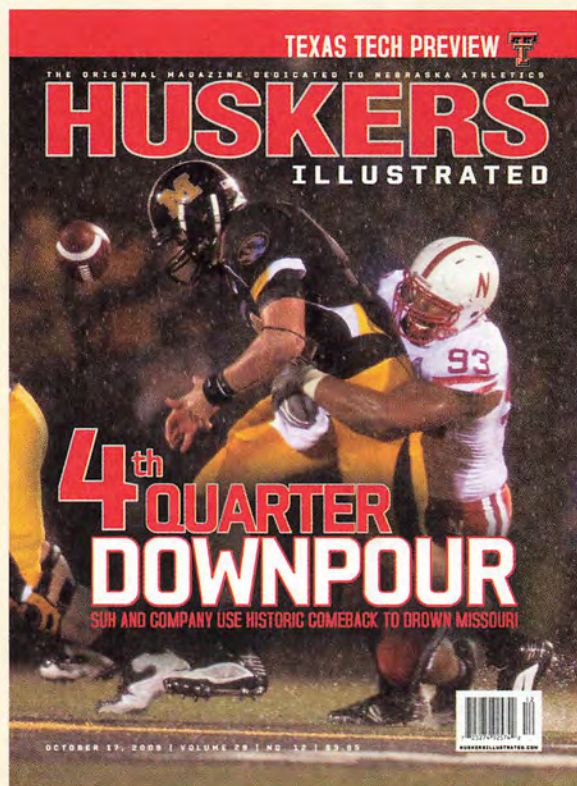
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## WATCHING MCNEILL

Six games into the season, junior tight end **MIKE MCNEILL** had 14 catches for 160 yards and three touchdowns. He was second on the team in receptions and tied for first in touchdown catches. Even so, there was concern among media and fans that he wasn't being utilized enough. After all, McNeill caught 32 passes for 442 yards and six touchdowns last season.

Still, his production has been sufficient for inclusion on the mid-season watch list for the John Mackey Award, as the nation's top collegiate tight end. McNeill was among 22

on the list.

The list also included Kansas State's **JERON MASTRUD** and Colorado's **RIAR GREER** from the Big 12.

Last season, "he'd get worn down because we played a lot of tight-end sets," tight ends coach **RON BROWN** said of McNeill, who had dropped about 20 pounds by season's end a year ago.

"So this year, I feel like I have the luxury of some very good competition in the (tight ends) room, some good players, some guys that have really come along."

## SIDELINES



### ON THE LINE

Freshman offensive lineman **JEREMIAH SIRLES** has yet to play this season. It would appear he will be redshirted. But no such decision has been made, according to offensive line coach **BARNEY COTTON**.

Sirles has been practicing with the top two units throughout the fall. "We did that with **RICKY HENRY** last year for the first month or so, and we've done it even longer with Jeremiah," said Cotton.

The 6-foot-6, 310-pound Sirles, from Lakewood, Colo., has "really progressed," Cotton said.

### NOT ALLOWED

The week after the Texas Tech loss, defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH** was asked if anything positive had been accomplished during the game. Whether or not there were such things, "it's only good when you come out with the win," he said. "It doesn't mean that much when you come out with a loss.

"It's a moral victory, and we don't allow those here."



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## Pelini continues to work on sideline behavior

**B**O PELINI was asked his reaction to the number of penalties his team had drawn in the Texas Tech game. "You watched it," he replied. "I don't have any reaction to it."

The Cornhuskers were flagged 12 times for 95 yards.

"I'm not talking about penalties," Pelini said. "Let's go to the next question . . . I can't."

He had already talked to officials about penalties during the game. Or at least, he had tried to talk to them, if "talk" is the correct word. He had certainly expressed his displeasure.

At his weekly news conference the next Tuesday, Pelini was asked if his confrontations with officials might be counterproductive. "You know what the interesting thing is, I think this year I've been pretty tame with the officials," he said. "I've been making a pretty conscious effort of doing that."

"Sometimes you find yourself in a situation where there is only so much you can stand. I've been probably the calmest I've ever been in my career this year. I continually work at that. Believe me you always have to keep working on things and look at yourself in the mirror and get better at things."

"I was frustrated the other day (of the Texas Tech game). It really didn't happen until the second half, until late, is when I got really frustrated. I don't



want to get into all the reasons why. I have to work on being too animated, probably. I'm not trying to be. That's just the area I have to work on."

Nebraska also was called for 12 penalties (for 108 yards) in the Missouri game and nine at Virginia Tech, including eight in the second half. In three games, two of them losses, against BCS opponents, the Huskers had been penalized 33 times – 11 of them for false starts, by the way.

Through the first five games, they were on pace to challenge the school single-season record, established in 1949,

when Bill Glassford's team averaged 8.8 penalties in nine games.

Pelini was asked if Athletic Director **TOM OSBORNE** had talked to him about his sideline encounters with officials. "No," he said. "It's pretty obvious. I'm a pretty intelligent guy."

"I know when you have to fix things. That's about the end of that."

Nebraska drew only three penalties in the next game against Iowa State. That was small consolation, however, considering the Huskers' school-record eight turnovers. **N**

### PENALTY PRONE

1949 – 8.8 per game	.....(79-550, 9 games)
2005 – 7.4 per game	..... (89-693, 12 games)
1948 – 7.3 per game	..... (73-585, 10 games)
2008 – 7.2 per game	..... (94-800, 13 games)
2003 – 6.8 per game	..... (89-710, 13 games)
2004 – 6.8 per game	..... (75-561, 11 games)





## READING THE FIELD

BY JOE GANZ

# Offense must continue to develop leaders

**IN MANY WAYS**, this year's Nebraska football team is in a similar situation to what we faced at this point last season. The key for the players is not to panic and realize that there are a lot of winnable games still on the schedule.

The turning point for us last year was kind of strange because even though we started 3-3, we still felt like we could play with any team in the country. When we lost 37-31 in overtime at Texas Tech, that interception I threw to end the game was such a devastating play -- such a bitter pill to swallow -- I doubt anyone outside the program thought we'd ever bounce back.

The amazing thing was how it wasn't just that everyone rallied around me but how everyone came together after that, and it made our team that much stronger. Nobody pointed a finger and everybody appreciated it, and the bond between all the players really grew from that point on.

One of the biggest reasons I think we were able to turn our season around was we had a bunch of strong leaders on the offense and on the team in general. We had guys who had been through everything already and had played a lot of games. We had that strong core group of guys in the locker room who took care of everything. They were the spokesmen on the team, answering all the difficult questions, and that allowed all the younger guys to just play and not worry about anything else.

After last year's Oklahoma game, it was kind of like a fresh start. We were able to go out and prove to everyone that we were a good team and the loss at Oklahoma was just a bump in the road. After that,

we knew we had games that we could win against Kansas, Kansas State and Colorado and it was just really refreshing to go back out and start preparing for another game with confidence.

This year's team has a defense that's pretty solid and is going to keep Nebraska in every game. How the rest of this season turns out is going to come down to the guys on the offensive side of the ball. Those offensive players need to continue to develop leaders and someone needs to take charge of that unit and calm everyone down and make sure panic doesn't set in and that everyone stays calm and just does

what they've been coached to do the last couple of years.

I have a lot of faith in the guys on this year's team that I played with and I know there are already some leaders on the offensive side of the ball. The thing is that it's tough sometimes to really be a leader when the results aren't showing on the field -- even though that's when you really need leadership the most.

It's kind of a slippery slope, but once the positive results start to come, the confidence and leadership will grow and I think this team will start to gain momentum and have a chance to finish strong. **N**

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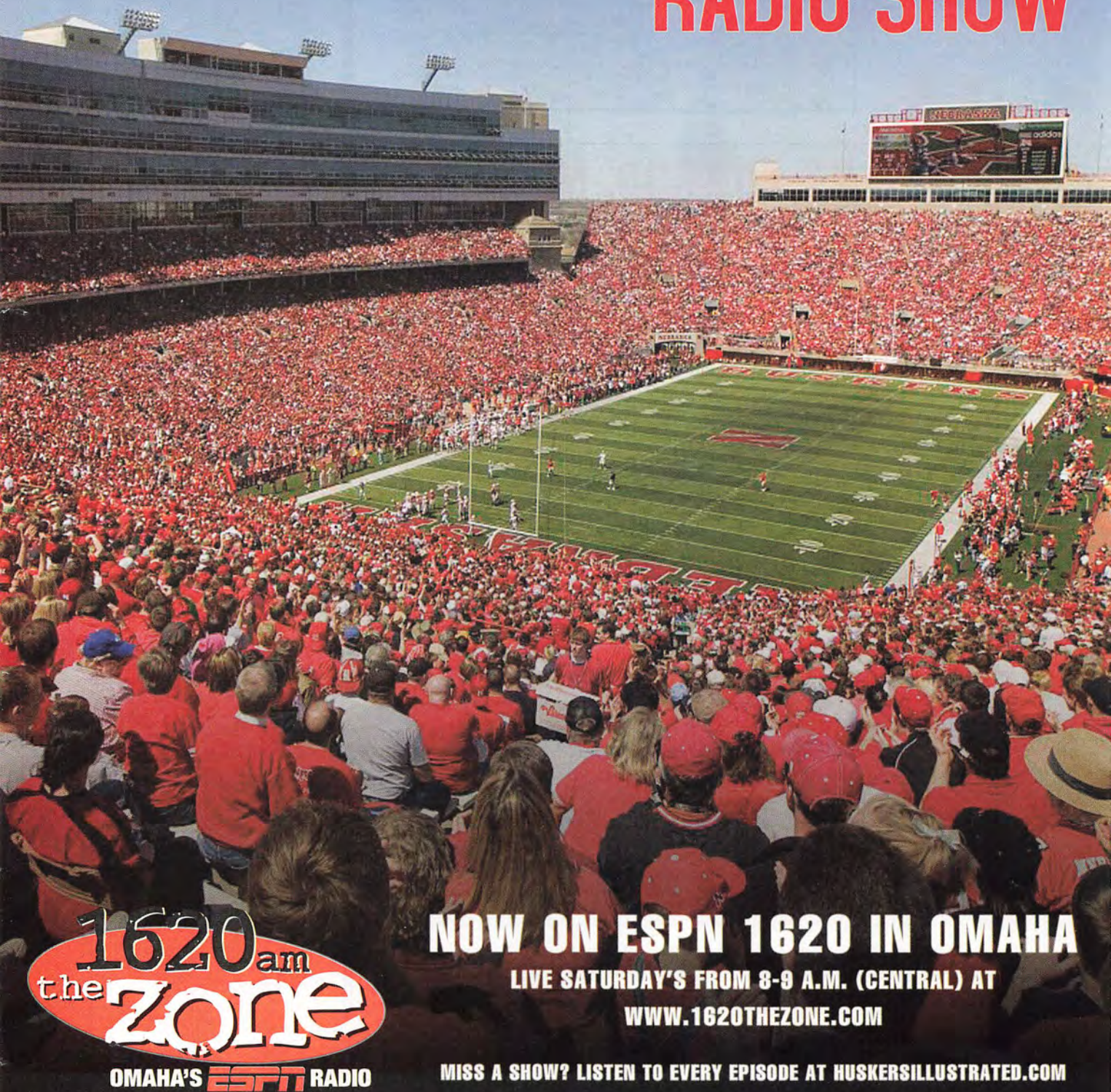
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## ST. EDWARD, NE



The Fischer family has had a significant impact on Cornhusker football, beginning with **CLETE FISCHER** in 1945, the first of four years in which he earned letters.

**GEORGE "POTSY" CLARK** was the head coach that season and again in 1948, when Fischer was a senior, after giving way to former Cornhusker **BERNIE MASTERSON** in 1946 and 1947. During Clete Fischer's four seasons, Nebraska had a combined record of 11-26 – but not for lack of effort. The student yearbook noted of Fischer's senior season: "Cornhusker fans were convinced that if fighting spirit could make winning teams this year's football squad would have been Big 7 champs." As it was, the team tied for fifth, with a 2-4 conference record.

Fischer led the team in rushing with 308 yards and four touchdowns on 74 carries, and his brother **KEN** was the team's leading passer, completing 20-of-31 for 296 yards and one touchdown, with three interceptions. Another from St. Edward, **DARWIN SALESTROM**, also played on that team.

Clete and Ken were followed at Nebraska by brothers **REX** (1955) and **PAT**, pictured (1958-60). They graduated high school in Oakland, Neb., and Omaha, respectively. And three of Clete's sons were Cornhusker lettermen, all defensive backs: **PAT** (1972-73), **TIM** (1976-77-78) and **DAN** (1980).

After a brief stint with the NFL's New York Giants, Clete began a coaching career at St. Edward High School. In 1960, he returned to Nebraska as **BILL JENNINGS'** backfield coach, and he was retained by **BOB DEVANEY**. He coached the freshman line (1962-66), served as head freshman coach (1967-68) and then began coaching the varsity offensive line, which he did for 17 years, retiring after the 1985 season.

### ST. EDWARD, NE

**County:** Boone

**Population:** 796

**Distance from Lincoln:** 100 miles

### NU FOOTBALL LETTERMEN:

Clete Fischer, QB (1945-46-47-48)

Ken Fischer, HB (1948-49)

Darwin Salestrom, G (1947-48-49)

Andrew Shanle, FS (2003-04-05-06)

Scott Shanle, LB (1999-00-01-02)

### DID YOU KNOW?

► Scott Shanle, who walked on at Nebraska, started for three seasons at strongside linebacker and earned all-conference honorable mention twice. He is in his seventh NFL season (after being a seventh round draft pick), the last four as a starter with the New Orleans Saints.

► St. Edward was named (in 1876) for Rev. Edward Sorin, the president of Notre Dame University.

► The village was incorporated in 1883. According to the community's Web site, legend has it that Nebraska law required 200 residents for incorporation and St. Edward had only 198. So two stone men were built to meet the requirement.

## SIDELINES



### MID-SEASON ALL-AMERICAN

#### NDAMUKONG SUH

was named to the Sporting News Mid-Season All-America Team, released the week of the Iowa State game. Suh was among only three Big 12 players on the team. The others were both on offense: Oklahoma State lineman Russell Okung and Texas wide receiver Jordan Shipley. Ten of 26 players on the team were from the SEC, including four from Alabama and three from Florida.

### GUMBY

**JACOB HICKMAN's** right ankle was wrapped the week after the Texas Tech game, as a result of the senior center's having been "rolled up," a common occurrence for an offensive lineman. Hickman wasn't concerned, however. "I'm like Gumby," he said. "I bend pretty easily."

"It's nothing. My whole body moves a little bit. I'm like a rubber band. I'm resilient."



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# Mike Smith

6-6, 295, Junior, Offensive Line, Las Vegas, Nev.

**HI: We know that you and Mike McNeill are really good friends. What do you guys do for fun that's safe to put in a publication?**

**SMITH:** Hang out with my girlfriend. We all hang out together, me, Mike, Dreu (Young) and Keith (Williams), just hanging out together like any college student would do, hanging at the apartment and watch TV. Nothing too exciting. Or at least not during the season.

**HI: If you had to tell fans one difficult aspect of playing on the offensive line that maybe they wouldn't realize, what would it be?**

**SMITH:** That everything really happens so fast. You have so much stuff going through your head at one time – what you're supposed to do, what the snap count is, what kind of defense you're looking at, if the defense moves, the crowd noise. Everything put together, it's so complicated. It's not just, "OK, line up and block this dude."

**HI: What kind of hobbies do you have? Do you do anything fun outside of football?**

**SMITH:** Let me think. Probably just play video games. Oh, I like to be out on the lake and stuff. I go out on my family's boat on Lake Mead in Las Vegas. Whenever I go home we always go out. That's probably one of my favorite things to do.

**HI: What's the biggest myth or misconception about living in Las Vegas?**

**SMITH:** That I live on the strip. That's probably the biggest misconception. Yeah, everybody's like, "Wow, how do you deal with that?" I live like 15 minutes away and I only go down there if people are in town or friends want to go out at night or something. For the most part, it's like anywhere else.

**HI: If you weren't playing football, you'd be playing ...?**

**SMITH:** Baseball, yeah, definitely. I love baseball. Always have. I always thought I was going to do something with baseball, ever since I was little. I really didn't start thinking about football until I started getting scholarship (offers) my junior year of high school. It just went from there. It just seemed like the right thing to do. Everything fell into place. With baseball, I had shoulder problems and stuff. It just didn't seem like it was going to go right at the time.

**HI: If you could spend a day with any professional athlete, who would it be, and why?**

**SMITH:** Oh, I was thinking about this the other day. What's the guy from the Oakland (Raiders) offensive line? The crazy guy. He went to Iowa. Robert Gallery, yeah. Robert Gallery. It seems like me and him would get along pretty well. He seems like a cool guy. Everything I hear about him it seems like me and him would have a lot of fun.

**HI: What's the one thing you like about Lincoln?**

**SMITH:** Everybody's so nice. I'd have to say that, even though everybody says that. And Nebraska football. That's a good thing about Lincoln. But I hate the cold. I hate it.

**HI: Do you have any funny Barney Cotton stories?**

**SMITH:** We have a lot of fun in our meeting room. Just some of the stories he tells from when he was playing, it's just outrageous some of the stuff that happened to him. I don't know if I can share. Just some of the characters he's had on his team.

**HI: Are you a big movie guy? What's your favorite movie and the best movie you've seen this summer?**

**SMITH:** The best movie that I've seen in a long time was Law Abiding Citizen, the one that just came out. It was really good. I like all the Saw movies. I can't wait for the (sixth) one to come out. I like comedy, too. I like everything, probably.

**HI: When you have a night game, what do you do all day long?**

**SMITH:** Nothing. It's the most boring thing ever. I hate night games because you just sit in the hotel and wait and wait and wait. It's terrible. Me and my roommate, Mike Caputo, we just sit there and wrestle, get warmed up. We try to push each other around, get mad. They probably wouldn't like us in the hotels if you told them we were doing that.





# Rick Berns

## Still signing autographs 31 years later

**IT'S BEEN 31 YEARS** since Rick Berns wore a Husker football uniform and nearly 26 years since he pulled an Oakland Raiders' jersey over his head, but the former Nebraska I-back is still signing autographs after all these years.

"It's amazing. I have three grandchildren and two more on the way, but I still sign a few of those Sports Illustrated covers every month," Berns said last week before heading from his home base in San Antonio to see Nebraska play Baylor in Waco.

The cover he was referring to is the Nov. 20, 1978 issue of SI that says "Nebraska Bursts Oklahoma's Bubble" with another line that says "Rick Berns Shreds the Sooners."

Yes, more than three decades later, that cover is still being printed, and Nebraska



fans are still buying

it, and they are still

sending it to Berns in San Antonio, where he graciously signs every one of them. He always smiles when he writes his name, closes his eyes for a few seconds to relive the memory and then neatly places them in their self-addressed envelopes and sends them back to grateful Husker fans across the country.

"It seems like I get two or three requests a month to sign that cover," Berns said.

"Sometimes, if I don't get one for a week, six or seven will float into my mailbox.

I only have one cover myself because we gave one to all the kids. We put ours in what we call our mother-in-law suite. People enjoy seeing that with the other memorabilia we still keep around."

Berns appreciates the role he played in Nebraska football history, but he's too busy as a project manager in general construction to let his mind wander on the Big Bang he helped create when the Huskers upset No. 1 Oklahoma, 17-14, in 1978 – Tom Osborne's first win over the Sooners in six tries as a head coach ... and the fans' choice as the best Nebraska win among an NCAA record 300 consecutive sellouts.

The pre-game spotlight focused on OU's



### RICK BERNs

**LETTERS:** 1976-77-78

**POSITION:** I-back

**WIFE:** Willie

**CHILDREN:** Daughter, April; Son, Corey; Stepsons Jason and Zac; Stepdaughter, Kaylen

**CURRENT:** Project Manager, general construction

**RESIDENCE:** San Antonio, Texas

explosive offensive weapons – quarterback Thomas Lott, Heisman Trophy-winning running back Billy Sims, halfback David Overstreet and fullback Kenny King – and the Sooners' vaunted defense.

But it was Berns who rushed for 113 yards and was named ABC's Offensive Player of the Game.

"Rick was a great player here," Osborne said. "If he had played on a team that was a national champion or even a 2- or 3-time Big Eight champion, he might have gotten more notice."

Had Nebraska not lost to Missouri, 35-31, after upsetting OU, the Huskers would have played Penn State in the Orange Bowl for the national championship.

"That's the only thing that made that win so bittersweet," Berns said before adding one quick footnote: "I think I have all the notice I can handle." **N**





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## STATE OF THE HUSKERS

BY CURT MCKEEVER

# Offense needs outside-the-box thinking

**REGARDLESS** OF experience or talent levels, it's within reason to think Nebraska should never commit eight turnovers in one game like it did in its loss to Iowa State.

That noted, let's not lose sight of this reality: We knew the Huskers had some major question marks on offense going into 2009, and so their mid-season struggles should come as no surprise.

We probably overlooked that NU averaged 440 yards in its four non-conference games, but things moved past the fine-print stage after the loss to Texas Tech, when for the second straight game the Huskers took more than 45 minutes to produce a touchdown.

And because of the turnovers against Iowa State, NU got shut out over the final 48 minutes of that contest. After rolling up 254 first-half yards, the Huskers proceeded to turn the ball over on five of their remaining six possessions and finished with 362.

Through seven games, that left them with a 381.4-yard average that ranked 58th nationally.

Again, that seems about right.

Why? Let's start with the short list of players who had significant starting experience entering the season.

Center Jacob Hickman had started Nebraska's previous 22 games, left tackle Mike Smith made 12 last year, left guard Keith Williams nine and tight end Mike McNeill 12.

At the other seven spots, the Huskers have players in their first season as full-time starters.

Niles Paul and Menelik Holt made four starts in 2008, but never were the featured wide receivers. Now, they're stepping in for Nate Swift and Todd Peterson, who finished Nos. 2 and 4 at Nebraska in career receiving yards and were good enough to make it to the final cuts of pre-season NFL camps.

Junior quarterback Zac Lee played in just two games last year, and the guy he replaced, Joe Ganz, shattered the NU single-season passing record. No pressure there.

On top of that, before the season started tackle Jaivorio Burkes, who started four times last year and three times as a freshman, was ruled out for an unspecified medical condition, and I-back Quentin Castille, who rushed for 125 yards in the Gator Bowl, was dismissed from the team.

Castille's absence has been magnified by the fact that Roy Helu, Jr. Nebraska's top rusher in 2008, injured a shoulder in the fifth game against Missouri and since then has had his physical contact curtailed in practice. Against Iowa State, Helu gave way to true freshman Dontrayevous Robinson.

After Paul's trials against Texas Tech and Iowa State, the junior from Omaha talked about fighting through darkness.

"Every athlete has a point where there's a slump, there's no sunshine," he said. "I'm just trying to find my sunshine."

Any of Nebraska's offensive players could have said the same thing.

Before being held to 10 and seven

points by Tech and Iowa State, the last time the Huskers had scored 10 or fewer in consecutive games was at the end of 1988 when they beat Colorado 7-0, Oklahoma 7-3 and lost to Miami 22-0 in the Orange Bowl.

Turning things around, coach Bo Pelini noted, will require some outside-the-box thinking while looking at the best way to utilize the talents of personnel.

"That always has to be the case, even when you're hitting on all cylinders," Pelini said. "You still have to keep looking for ways to improve. Now it just becomes...a bigger challenge to get that done."

Third-year offensive coordinator Shawn Watson falls back on three standbys – fundamentals, attention to detail and relentless effort – while striving to find better consistency and production.

"That's why you don't scrap and go to another offense. You improve what you're doing," Watson said. "You look at how to accentuate what you can do – streamline and make it a little bit easier for younger players. But we have to do it. They've got to learn to play confident."

Pelini preaches the same thing, and sounds like he believes it won't be long before the Huskers put enough things together to become efficient again.

"You just have to work yourself through this," he said. "I tell them... 'We've done it before, you can do it again.' At times, we've been very good on offense moving the football and doing some very good things." **N**



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PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN

## A special start

**W**ith a two-game losing streak and a struggling offense that was starting true freshman

quarterback Cody

Green on the road at Baylor, Nebraska was desperately in need of an early spark.

Thanks to a pair of defensive reserves, the Cornhuskers got just that from their special teams. After Nebraska's defense stopped the Bears on their first possession of the game, freshman linebacker Eric Martin forced a blocked punt and redshirt freshman cornerback Justin Blatchford returned it 25 yards for a touchdown, sparking NU to a 7-0 lead just 89 seconds into the game.

Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said the early

punt block was "really big" for Nebraska, which built a 20-0 halftime lead and held on for a 20-10 victory over Baylor.

"It got us the momentum," Pelini said. "When you're starting Cody, it kind of took the pressure off him a little bit, getting seven points on the board early."

Martin said the Huskers weren't necessarily going for the punt block.

"Last week against Iowa State, we had that fake against us and Coach Pelini told me to just go and hit the middle of the wedge so they wouldn't fake it," Martin said. "That's what I did and I ended up hitting him into the punter. ... I was just coming in, doing what the coaches told me and I ended up making something happen."

Martin said he never actually touched

the ball, which caromed off the backside on the Baylor blocker and went straight up before being plucked out of the air by Blatchford. The 6-foot-1, 195-pound cornerback from Ponca, who politely declined post-game interview requests, capped his return with a dive into the end zone for the TD.

"I didn't know it was blocked until I heard the crowd yelling, so I looked around and Blatchford was picking it up," Martin said. "I was hoping it would just pump everyone up because our offense has been having a rough time."

"Special teams -- nobody really pays attention to usually -- and when something big happens, it's the biggest play of the game." **N**

— by Terry Douglass





PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN

## TALE OF TWO HALVES

It was an up-and-down day for quarterback **CODY GREEN** in his starting debut for Nebraska.

Green, who got the starting nod on over junior **ZAC LEE** against Baylor, finished 12-of-21 passing for 128 yards. The 6-foot-4, 220-pound true freshman also rushed eight times for 43 yards and helped the Huskers to a 20-0 halftime lead.

However, the Green fortunes changed in the second half as he threw an interception that was returned 45 yards for a touchdown by Baylor's **CLIFTON ODOM** and also lost a fourth-quarter fumble. The Huskers produced just four first downs and 104 yards after the intermission.

Nebraska's 273 total yards against Baylor were 89 fewer than the Huskers had with Lee at quarterback in the previous week's 9-7 loss to Iowa State.

"The first half, things were rolling really good for us – everybody was making plays, offense and defensive-wise," said Green, who became the first true freshman to start for Nebraska at quarterback since Tommie Frazier in 1992. "The second half, we kind of went out there and just shot blanks. We were lucky enough that our defense came up big in the second half for us, but in games like this, you really can't go out and (get shut out) in the second half."

Nebraska offensive coordinator Shawn Watson said Green had some "rough spots," but liked the way the Texas native battled.

"He did some things that freshmen sometimes do their first time out," Watson said. "He's got a lot to get better at, but there's no doubt, he competed, gave us some nice runs and did some good things."

### STILL SUPPORTIVE

Despite losing the starting quarterback job to true freshman **CODY GREEN**, junior **ZAC LEE** continued to be a team player, Green said.

"This thing hasn't changed our friendship or anything like that," Green said. "We're both helping each other and I told him before the game, 'Hey, I'm going to need you more now than I ever have before – just because now that you're on the sidelines, you get to see things that I don't see.'"

Green said Lee didn't let him down.

"He helped me out tremendously," Green said. "I went to him after every series, asked him what he saw and things like that. He just stayed supportive for me."





## QUICKLY

### AILING I-BACKS

Nebraska coach **BO PELINI** said he wasn't pleased with his team's inability to pick up key first downs late in the Baylor game to salt the victory away against the Bears.

"Absolutely, that's a huge concern," Pelini said. "We've got to be able to run the football better. We didn't run the football to my liking today."

While Nebraska center **JACOB HICKMAN** said

"miscommunication" on the offensive line resulted in some of the difficulties running the ball, the problem could also be attributed to Nebraska's injury problems at I-back.

Already missing No. 2 I-back

**REX BURKHEAD** with a foot injury, starter **ROY HELU JR.** re-aggravated a shoulder injury and was limited to 24 yards on seven carries. **DONTRAYEVOUS**

**ROBINSON**, who led Nebraska with 61 yards rushing on 13 carries against Baylor, also got "dinged up," according to Pelini, but probably could have returned to the game. The Huskers finished the game with **LESTER WARD** and **AUSTIN JONES** as their two available I-backs.

### GAME CAPTAINS

Nebraska's game captains against Baylor were junior I-back Roy Helu Jr., senior defensive end Barry Turner, junior place-kicker Adi Kunalic and sophomore defensive back Anthony Blue.

## TEXAS HOMECOMING

A total of 12 Texas natives made the Nebraska travel roster for the Baylor game.

They included: Cornerback Anthony Blue (Cedar Hills), wide receiver Curenski Gilleylen (Leander), cornerback Andrew Green (San Antonio), quarterback Cody Green (Dayton), wide receiver Will Henry (El Paso), place kicker Adi Kunalic (Fort Worth), I-back Marcus Mendoza (Houston), safety Courtney Osborne (Garland), wide receiver Steven Osborne (Garland), I-back Dontrayevous Robinson (Euless), offensive lineman Brandon Thompson (The Woodlands) and I-back Lester Ward (Brenham).

Green, who was making his first collegiate start about 200 miles from his hometown, said he had to come up with approximately 50 tickets for family and friends who wanted to come to the game. The crowd of 31,702 at Floyd Casey Stadium included an estimated 10,000 Nebraska fans.

"That was a really big, helpful thing, especially for me, knowing that I had friends and family out here," Green said. "I know there are a lot of other guys on the football

team (from Texas) and they had (a lot) of friends and family here, so it felt like a homecoming for all of us."

## SCENERY CHANGE

With **CODY GREEN** making his first career start at quarterback, Nebraska's coaching staff also shuffled its game-day positioning. Offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON**, who is typically stationed in the press box during games, traded places with receivers coach **TED GILMORE** and was on the sideline against Baylor.

"Really, the primary reason was to be down there with Cody in his first start, help him see things and draw through some of the things that he may have needed to see," Watson said. "I'll probably keep doing it to help him out."

Green said having Watson on the sideline was very helpful for him.

"It was a direct line from me to him in this game," Green said. "I could go right to him and see what I messed up on and just get his feedback instead of having to go through other people. It helped a lot – it helped my confidence especially, to have him on the sideline."



PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN



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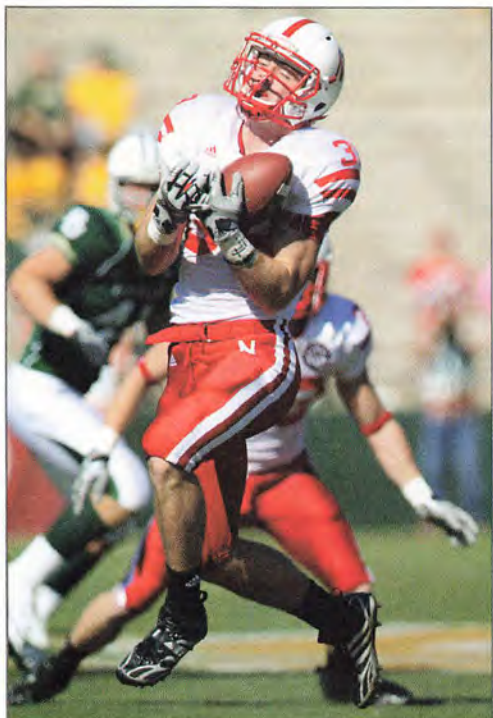
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NEBRASKA

10

BAYLOR





Freshman Justin Blatchford returns a blocked punt for a first quarter touchdown.

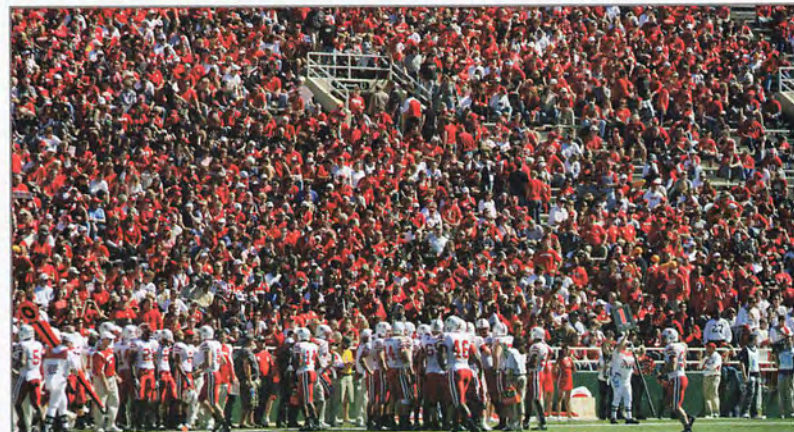


## FANS OF THE GAME



PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN

Left to right: Steve Hernandez, Brett Kay, Brett Gotch and Calvin Kramper, from South Sioux City, Neb., support the Huskers while giving their best KISS impersonation.



Left: Dejon Gomes intercepts a pass in the endzone. Middle right: Barry Turner records one of his four tackles in the game. Above: Husker fans accounted for the majority of the announced 31,702 in attendance at Floyd Casey Stadium.



# REPORT CARD

## RUSHING:

The Cornhuskers averaged less than 4 yards per carry and were never consistent. More to the point, they managed only 5-of-15 third-down conversions. "We've got to be able to run the football," said coach **BO PELINI**. "We didn't run the football to my liking today."

## PASSING:

The passing game was lackluster. **CODY GREEN** teamed with **NILES PAUL** for 45 yards to set up the Huskers' only offensive touchdown. Baylor's only touchdown came when **CLIFTON ODOM** picked off a Green pass and returned it 45 yards. How's that for numerical symmetry?

## RUSHING DEFENSE:

Even without subtracting yardage lost in sacks, Baylor's rushing total told the tale. The Bears couldn't consistently run, leaving freshman quarterback Nick Florence to contend with a withering pass rush. Baylor went into the game ranked No. 77 nationally in rushing. It was apparent why.

## PASSING DEFENSE:

The bulk of Baylor's offense came through the air, 222 yards. But the Cornhuskers intercepted two passes and sacked Florence seven times. "They had a couple of routes that we gave up deep balls, but, you know what, we knew coming in that they were going to take 10, 12 shots downfield," said Nebraska defensive coordinator Carl Pelini. "That's OK. The coverage was good."

## KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:

Justin Blatchford's return of a blocked punt for a touchdown got the Cornhuskers off to a good start. Alex Henery averaged 42.1 yards on seven punts, in addition to kicking two field goals, and he made the tackle on a 62-yard return that involved two laterals in the final minute.

## FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

### NEBRASKA STARS

► Papillion La Vista wide receiver **SIR BULLOCK** had seven catches for 133 yards and two touchdowns in a 28-22 first round playoff win over Omaha Creighton Prep.

► Blair running back **RYAN RANDALL** had 39 carries for 281 yards and four touchdowns in a 38-28 win over Omaha Gross.

► Elkhorn running back **TREVOR ROACH** had 14 carries for 150 yards and three touchdowns in a 49-14 win over Lincoln North Star.

► Crete 2011 running back **BROCK SHERMAN** had 33 carries for 190 yards and one touchdown in a 21-7 win over Plattsmouth.

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**Mike Babcock**  
(43-19/7-1)



**Sean Callahan**  
(41-21/7-1)



**John Talman**  
(41-21/6-2)



**Matt Davison**  
(43-19/7-1)

(Season/Last Week)					
Oklahoma at Nebraska	OU 28-10	OU 24-7	OU 23-13	OU 27-24	NU 18-16
Oklahoma State at Iowa State	OSU 30-3	OSU 35-17	OSU 41-13	OSU 38-13	OSU 34-17
Kansas at Kansas State	KSU 26-24	KSU 35-31	KU 45-27	KU 28-27	KU 31-27
UCF at Texas	UT 52-6	UT 49-3	UT 48-13	UT 41-13	UT 44-13
Texas A&M at Colorado	A&M 24-17	A&M 28-24	A&M 37-31	A&M 36-14	CU 27-21
Baylor at Missouri	MU 35-6	MU 42-13	MU 31-10	MU 31-13	MU 34-17
LSU at Alabama	UA 20-18	UA 15-10	UA 17-13	UA 38-34	UA 20-16
Ohio State at Penn State	OSU 17-16	OSU 28-27	PSU 34-30	PSU 28-21	PSU 27-23



# GameStats

## SUMMARY

## INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

### SCORING

Oct. 31, 2009  
Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.  
Attendance: 31,702

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Tot
Nebraska	10	10	0	0	20
Baylor	0	0	10	0	10

#### First Quarter

	NU	BU
NU Blatchford 25-yard Punt Return (Henery Kick) 13:31	7	0

	NU	BU
NU Henery 45-yard Field Goal 05:43	10	0
Drive: 11 plays 44 yds 5:04		

#### Second Quarter

	NU	BU
NU Henery 22-yard Field Goal 12:16	13	0
Drive: 12 plays 75 yds 4:56		

	NU	BU
NU Robinson 1-yard Run (Henery Kick) 09:28	20	0
Drive: 3 plays 46 yds 1:00		

#### Third Quarter

	BU	NU
BU Parks 41-yard Field Goal 09:22	20	3
Drive: 7 plays 18 yds 4:00		

	BU	NU
BU Odom TD INT (Parks Kick) 03:27	20	10

### TEAM STATS

	NU	BU
<b>Total First Downs</b>	11	18
Rushing	5	3
Passing	6	11
Penalty	0	4
<b>Rushing Attempts</b>	38	32
<b>Yards Gained Rushing</b>	163	94
<b>Yards Lost Rushing</b>	18	40
<b>Net Yards Rushing</b>	145	54
<b>Net Yards Passing</b>	128	222
Passes Attempted	21	38
Passes Completed	12	19
Had Intercepted	1	2
Percent Completion	57.1%	50.0%
Yards per Attempt	6.1	5.8
Yards per Completion	10.7	11.7
<b>Total Offensive Plays</b>	59	70
<b>Total Net Yards</b>	273	276
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.6	3.9
<b>Fumbles: No-Lost</b>	1-1	2-1
<b>Penalties: No-Yards</b>	6-65	4-25
<b>Punts: No-Yards</b>	7-295	6-175
Avg. Per Punt	42.1	29.2
Avg. Net Punt	27.7	20.7
<b>Punt Returns: No-Yards</b>	2-51	4-101
<b>Kickoff Returns: No-Yards</b>	3-55	2-53
<b>Interception Returns: No-Yards</b>	2-1	1-45
<b>Fumble Returns: No-Yards</b>	0-0	0-0
<b>Miscellaneous Yards</b>	0	0
<b>Possession Time</b>	29:52	30:08
<b>Third-Down Conversions</b>	5-15	5-16
Percentage	33.3%	31.2%
<b>Fourth-Down Conversions</b>	0-0	1-2
Percentage	0.0%	50.0%
<b>Sacks By: No-Yards</b>	7-30	0-0

### NEBRASKA

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Robinson	13	63	2	61	4.7	1	23
Green	8	48	5	43	5.4	0	10
Helu Jr.	7	26	2	24	3.4	0	10
Ward	7	22	6	16	2.3	0	7
Jones	2	4	0	4	2.0	0	4
TEAM	1	0	3	-3	-3.0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Green	21	12	57.1	1	128	0	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	2	54	0	45
Reed	1	22	0	22
Robinson	3	22	0	19
Cooper	3	12	0	7
Kinnie	1	10	0	10
Damkroger	1	5	0	5
Helu Jr.	1	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Blatchford	0	25	1	25
Paul	1	17	0	17
Martin	1	9	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Marlowe	2	41	0	24
Paul	1	14	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Henery	7	42.1	57	0	0	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Henery	2	2	45	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>

Defense	Tac	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Crick	10	3	13	6.5-28	5-24	1	0	1
Asante	3	3	6	0.5-2	0-0	1	0	0
Hagg	6	0	6	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Dillard	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	3	2	5	2.5-5	1-3	0	0	0
Amukamara	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	3	0	0
O'Hanlon	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Turner	3	1	4	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0
Fisher	1	2	3	1-3	1-3	0	0	0
Gomes	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Steinkuler	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Allen	0	2	2	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Hays	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blatchford	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Cassidy	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dennard	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Grove	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Henery	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Meredith	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
West	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	2	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Amukamara	1	1	0	1
Gomes	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

### BAYLOR

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Finley	8	25	6	19	2.4	0	7
Wright	4	18	3	15	3.8	0	7
Ganaway	2	10	0	10	5.0	0	6
Florence	16	38	30	8	0.5	0	12
Salubi	2	3	1	2	1.0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Florence	38	19	50.0	2	222	0	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41</b>

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Gettis	7	124	0	41
Wright	4	49	0	28
Smith	2	21	0	12
Finley	2	14	0	10
Taylor	1	12	0	12
Akers	1	7	0	7
Salubi	2	-5	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41</b>

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Casey	0	62	0	62
Buerck	4	45	0	30
Smith	0	-6	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Williams	2	53	0	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31</b>

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Epperson	4	38.2	44	0	0	1	0	1
Florence	1	22.0	22	0	0	0	0	1
TEAM	1	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Parks	1	2	41	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>

Defense	Tac	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Pawelek	2	7	9	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Jones	4	3	7	1-5	0-0	0	0	0
Atchison	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Lake	5	1	6	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Landor	3	3	6	0.5-0	0-0	1	0	0
Francis	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Lamb	5	0	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Hicks	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Johnson	1	2	3	1-3	0-0	0	1	0
Taylor	1	2	3	0.5-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bryant	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Casey	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Williams	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blaylock	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Coffey	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Judy	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Odom	0	1	1	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0
Patin	0	1	1	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	1
Robertson	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Scotton	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Odom	1	45	1	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>



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# Jones faces difficult task of replacing Heisman quarterback

BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE

**IN TERMS OF** personality, Oklahoma quarterback Landry Jones is similar to Sam Bradford, according to Sooners head coach Bob Stoops.

"He's a very humble guy but has a great passion to play," Stoops said of Jones. "He has a calm demeanor to him. Those kind of guys, they have that calm presence to them and relaxed look. But they're really competitive.

"I don't know; it just kind of resonates."

Jones has faced a difficult task this season stepping in for Bradford, the 2008 Heisman Trophy winner, who announced Oct. 25 his plans to undergo surgery on his throwing shoulder and enter the NFL Draft in April.

Bradford sprained the AC joint in his throwing shoulder in Oklahoma's season-opening loss to Brigham Young and returned to action five weeks later against Baylor. But he aggravated the injury during the second offensive series Oct. 17 against Texas. That turned out to be Bradford's last appearance as a Sooner.

At that point, Jones took over the position for good. A redshirted freshman from Artesia, N.M., Jones has started five games this season after expecting to spend most of it watching Bradford.

"We like his great pocket presence and delivery and balance," Stoops said of Jones. "You also love the fact he was a two-time state champion in high school."

Jones ended his career at Artesia High School by winning back-to-back state crowns. As a senior in 2007, he threw for

BOB STOOPS



3,850 yards and 44 touchdowns, with only 11 interceptions. As a junior, he threw for 3,432 yards and 45 TDs.

He was ranked by Rivals.com as the nation's No. 6 pro-style quarterback.

Before Bradford's announcement Oct. 25, Jones had been pushing forward, unsure exactly when or if Bradford would return. The 6-foot-4, 210-pound Jones handled the situation well, Stoops said.

"Landry is such a level-headed guy," the coach said. "In all these situations this year, he's handled them all really well. I don't think there's been anything being held or lingering over his head whether Sam was going to play or not. We've known where Sam has been and where Landry's been. I don't think it's been an issue."

## NOTES

► Jones is named after former Dallas Cowboys head coach Tom Landry. Jones' parents are huge Cowboy fans.

► Oklahoma has had no fewer than seven offensive starters miss at least one game with injury or suspension, which helps explain its struggles moving the ball at times. The Sooners, though, seemed to find their stride during a 21-point second half en route to a 35-13 triumph Oct. 24 at Kansas.

### OKLAHOMA QUICK FACTS

**Head coach:** Bob Stoops, 11th season (113-27)

**Enrollment:** 26,656

**Colors:** Crimson and Cream

**2008 record:** 12-2 (7-1 Big 12)

### 2009 SCHEDULE

9/5	BYU, L, 14-13
9/12	Idaho State, W, 64-0
9/19	Tulsa, W, 45-0
10/3	at Miami, L, 21-20
10/10	Baylor, W, 33-7
10/17	vs. Texas, L, 16-13
10/24	at Kansas, W, 35-13
10/31	Kansas State, 6 PM
11/7	at Nebraska, TBA
11/14	Texas A&M, TBA
11/21	at Texas Tech, TBA
11/28	Oklahoma State, TBA





# FAMILY FRIENDS

PELINI BROTHERS AND STOOPS SHARE SPECIAL BOND | BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE





**W**hen Bo Pelini and Carl Pelini stare across the field and see Bob Stoops on the opposite sideline, they see a close family friend.

Not to mention a former boss.

Bo Pelini spent the 2004 season as co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach at Oklahoma under Stoops.

Carl Pelini, meanwhile, credits Stoops for getting him started in the college coaching business.

Indeed, Stoops played a lead role in Kansas State's hiring of Carl Pelini as a graduate assistant in 1989 when Stoops was defensive backs coach for the Wildcats.

"He gave me my opportunity," Carl

Bob Stoops, age 49 and in his 11th season as Oklahoma head coach, is 5 years older than Carl Pelini. Stoops actually is approximately the same age as Vince Pelini, one of Carl Pelini's seven siblings.

Bob Stoops and Vince Pelini played on the same football and basketball teams at Cardinal Mooney High School in Youngstown, Ohio, where the Pelini-Stoops bonds were formed in earnest.

The late Ron Stoops, Sr. was a legendary defensive coordinator at Cardinal Mooney. He coached his four sons – Ron, Jr., Bob, Mike and Mark – and all five Pelini boys, all in a span of a decade.

Mark Stoops, the 42-year-old defensive coordinator at Arizona, was a year ahead of 41-year-old Bo Pelini at Cardinal Mooney.

Mike Stoops is the 47-year-old head coach at Arizona.

"We were friends with all of them – more during high school and after high school," Carl Pelini said. "We've stayed close throughout the years."

"That school (Cardinal Mooney) was like that," Carl added. "I mean, you stayed involved with the school. It's a real family feeling there. It's just a lot of friendships that stay and carry over for your life."

Carl Pelini actually was coaching at Cardinal Mooney with Ron Stoops, Sr. right before Bob Stoops hired Carl at Kansas State. Ron Stoops, Sr. suffered a heart attack on the sideline during a game in 1988. His life ended at age

**"I lived in their spare bedroom for months. He would've let me live there forever. He's a great guy."**

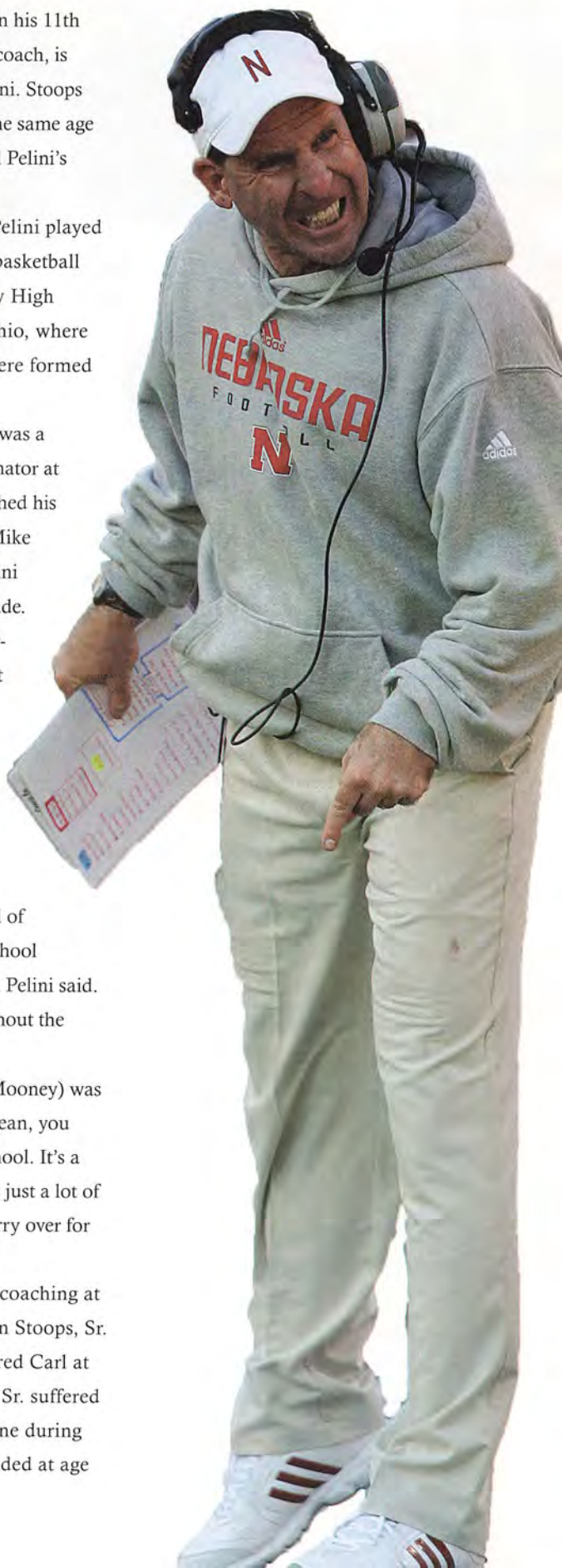
**Carl Pelini on Bob Stoops**

Pelini said.

Carl Pelini worked mostly with the defensive backs during his time at Kansas State (1989-91).

Bob said, 'Come live with me for as long as you want,' " Carl recalled. "Like the typical male, he didn't tell his wife I was coming. And I had never met her. Or maybe I had met her one other time. But I showed up with everything I owned in a Ford Escort, and Bob was headed out recruiting. He looks at his wife Carol, and says, 'Hey, by the way, Carl's going to be staying with us.'"

"I lived in their spare bedroom for months. He would've let me live there forever. He's a great guy."







54, in an ambulance before he reached the hospital.

"I don't want to bring up bad memories, but Bob and I crossed paths when his father passed away," Carl Pelini said. "After that season, Cardinal Mooney started the Ron Stoops Memorial Scholarship, and it was at that banquet when I approached Bob and said, 'You know, I would love to make that move into the college game.' He just said, 'I'll do anything I can to help you.'"

Carl Pelini was a defensive graduate assistant on Bill Snyder's staff at Kansas State in 1989 and 1990, then served as a restricted earnings coach in 1991.

"I almost fainted when I got west of Kansas City," Carl recalled of driving into Kansas for the first time. "I had never been to the Midwest before. I remember driving in at night and thinking, 'I can't even see a light.'"

"But I had a great experience there."

Carl Pelini coached on a K-State staff that included, among others, current South Florida head coach Jim Leavitt and current Kansas head coach Mark Mangino. Mangino is among the many coaches who have come from the Steel Valley region of Ohio and western Pennsylvania.

Of Bob Stoops, Carl said, "He's a good technician. He understands kids. He communicates with his players really well. He's just a good person all the way around. He's solid.

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thinking, 'I  
can't even  
see a light'"**

**Carl Pelini**

You can trust him, and I'm sure his players feel that and want to play hard for him.

"I've always felt he's a great players' coach. He can be hard on them. But they like him. They want to do well for him. And he's a fiery competitor."

The Stoops family lived on the south side of Youngstown, a few miles from the Pelini home. There were plenty of kids in the area, and plenty of parks. The kids would play all sorts of sports. It was at one of these parks where Mark "Bo" Pelini earned his nickname. It originated from Bo Scott, a former hard-charging Cleveland Browns running back.

There are obvious parallels in the rises of Bo Pelini and Bob Stoops. Both played defensive back at Big Ten schools (Pelini at Ohio State, Stoops at Iowa). Both broke into the college coaching business at Iowa under Hayden Fry (Pelini in 1991, Stoops in 1983). Both ascended from defensive coordinator positions to head coach.

And both were obviously heavily influenced by Ron Stoops, Sr.

"He was not only a hell of a coach but also a great role model with how he was with his family," Bo Pelini said. "He was a tremendous person. As a coach, he was tremendous, very detailed.

"You know, you're around guys who impact your life



from when you played for them. You watch them and respect them. You kind of become a product of what you see and what you do. And you'll notice that you see a number of guys from Cardinal Mooney who went into coaching... There's the Stoops brothers, myself, Tim Beck, Carl, there's a ton of them.

"The guys who coached you kind of shove you in that direction because you think, 'I wouldn't mind that being me someday.' "

It's obviously worked out well for the Stoops and Pelini brothers. Their friendship endures, as does their mutual respect.

When Bo Pelini peers across the field and sees Bob Stoops, he'll see a fellow head coach he greatly admires.

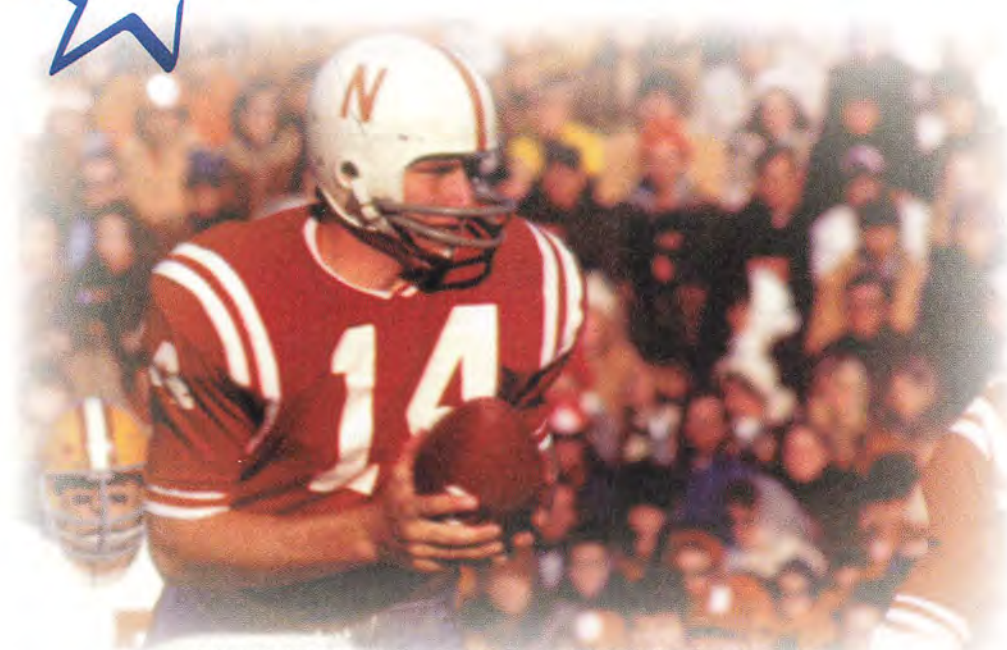
"He's very intelligent," Bo Pelini said. "But the big thing is he's a tremendous competitor, a very prideful guy. He's a winner. That's who he is, in every aspect of his life.

"Just like his dad. He's a high-character individual." **N**



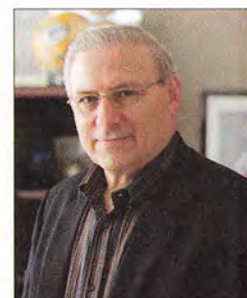
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*All-American Quarterback,  
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## Huskers land California wide receiver

BY RICK SHAW

A couple of days after Nebraska's loss to Iowa State, the Husker coaches received a commitment from Moreno Valley, Calif., Rancho Verde High School wide receiver **QUINCY ENUNWA**. The 6-foot-2, 200-pounder visited the Husker campus the previous week, along with fellow receiver pledge **CURTIS CARTER**.

According to Enunwa, it didn't take him long to determine he wanted to be a Husker.

"I knew almost as soon as I got back," Enunwa said. "I just had to talk it over with my parents."

Though Enunwa's only other offer came from Washington State, Rancho Verde head coach **PETE DUFFY** said it was only a matter of time before other schools followed suit.

"Quincy's just been a one-year starter for us," Duffy explained. "Last year, he played behind **TERRENCE MILLER** who's at Arizona right now. He's more of a late developer. It all really came together for him in the spring and summer after he showed flashes last year, and when he put the pads on in the fall, he really took off. Otherwise, he would have had multiple PAC-10 offers right off the bat."

"I think he just has a great combination of size and physicality, and he's a natural ball catcher with his hands. He also does a great job of running hard after the catch."

Through six games this season, Enunwa had tallied a league-leading 31 receptions

QUINCY ENUNWA



for 484 yards (15.6 yards per reception) and eight touchdowns. He said the Nebraska coaches are looking to utilize his speed (4.5 seconds in the 40-yard dash) and size to help bolster the Husker passing game.

"They talked to me about being physical," Enunwa explained. "I think I can go in there and bring that physicality to their team and be a big receiver over the middle, with sure hands."

### PASS-RUSHING 'FREAK'

Nebraska is doing everything it can to dip into the talent-rich pool of prospects in Florida this season. Four-star running back **GIOVANNI BERNARD**, 4-star receiver **JOSHUA REESE** and 3-star receiver **WILLIS WRIGHT** have all traveled from the Sunshine State to Lincoln this fall for official visits.

Another prospect, linebacker/defensive end **DELVIN JONES** out of Miami Palmetto hopes to follow their lead and get an up-close view of the Nebraska campus between now and the end of the year.

"I've been watching Nebraska play a couple of games this year and they're playing pretty good – especially defensively," the 6-6, 230-pound Jones said. "I've been talking to Coach (**TIM**) **BECK**, and he's been telling me to check out their games. I've been tuning in, and I like what I've been seeing."

Jones, rated the No. 29 player in Florida and among the top 250 players in the country by Rivals (4 stars), has racked up some impressive defensive statistics over the past couple of seasons. As a junior, he earned second-team all-county and third-team all-state honors after compiling 70 tackles and 20 sacks. Through five games



this season, he had logged over 30 tackles and had picked up seven sacks from his linebacker-defensive end position.

"All of the coaches tell me that I can play either defensive end or linebacker in college," Jones said. "They all say that I'm a 'freak' on the pass rush."

The blue-chipper from Miami committed to Tennessee this summer. Though still pledged to the Volunteers, he said he wants to visit some other campuses before finalizing his college plans.

"I think I have something like 50 or 60 offers now," Jones said. "Right now, I'm verbally committed to Tennessee. I haven't seen their campus yet, but I kept up with Coach (LANE) KIFFIN and what he did at USC and liked his track record.

"I'm still looking at a few other schools though, too. My plan is to visit Alabama, Tennessee, Ole Miss, Arkansas and Nebraska. I might also take an unofficial visit to USC, and I'll probably go back up to Florida at some point also."

## NEBRASKA'S OFFICIAL VISITS

NAME	POS.	HT	WT	DATE	COMMIT
Damon Williams	DT	6-4	300	11/21	
Jay Guy	DT	6-1	300	11/7	California
Austin Hill	WR	6-3	192	11/7	
Derrick Malone	DB	5-11	165	11/7	
Joshua Mitchell	DB	5-11	165	11/7	
Harold Mobley	ATH	6-4	225	11/7	
Tobi Okuyemi	DE	6-3	250	11/7	
Tyler Slavin	WR	6-2	182	11/7	
Giovanni Bernard	RB	5-9	198	10/24	Notre Dame
Curtis Carter	ATH	5-10	161	10/17	Nebraska
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	10/17	Nebraska
Andre Hal	DB	6-0	170	10/17	Vanderbilt
Derron Smith	DB	5-11	173	10/17	
Ciante Evans	DB	5-11	170	9/26	Nebraska
Chase Harper	TE	6-6	248	9/26	
Joshua Reese	WR	6-1	182	9/26	
Chase Rome	DE	6-3	290	9/26	Nebraska
Bud Sasser	WR	6-3	200	9/26	
Bobby Swigert	WR	6-1	175	9/26	
Colin Tanigawa	OL	6-3	286	9/26	
Willis Wright	WR	6-2	185	9/26	
Harvey Jackson	DB	6-2	185	9/5	Nebraska
Tejay Johnson	ATH	6-2	190	9/5	
Mike Moudy	OL	6-7	291	9/5	Nebraska
Donovan Vestal	DE	6-5	240	9/5	Nebraska



## IN STATE SPOTLIGHT

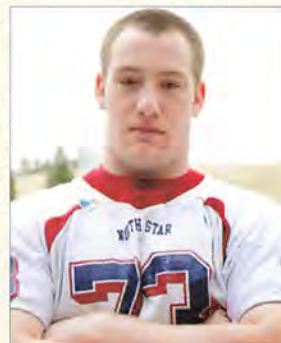
BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Lincoln North Star offensive lineman **BRYCE**

**DIETZ** is one of the top Division I prospects in the state of Nebraska. The 6-foot-5, 285-pound Dietz is a verbal commitment to the University of Ohio. Huskers Illustrated caught up with Dietz for this week's in-state recruiting spotlight.

**CALLAHAN:** Why did you pick the University of Ohio?

**DIETZ:** So far it's the only one I know of that offered me a full ride. For me, getting school paid for is probably the first thing I have to worry about. Location, I'll just have to get over that. Otherwise, it's paid for.



**CALLAHAN:** You grew up parking cars outside Memorial Stadium as a kid in your neighborhood. How did you start doing that job?

**DIETZ:** I don't know how that started. I guess it was my dad, because he did when he was a kid, too. He lived in the same house. It pretty much started with my dad. We parked cars everywhere around there.

**CALLAHAN:** What's your favorite meal?

**DIETZ:** Spaghetti is probably my favorite thing to eat.

**CALLAHAN:** Give me one hidden talent you might have?

**DIETZ:** I can draw well. I always do my weekly picture for the team in the locker room. We have an hour before practice, and I always get bored, so I just start drawing on the white board. People thought it was funny, so I kept doing it.

**CALLAHAN:** What's the Web site you visit the most frequently on the Internet?

**DIETZ:** I would say HuskerLandPreps.com. I've been checking that one out a lot lately. I just check out what's going on.

**CALLAHAN:** Who's your favorite movie character of all time?

**DIETZ:** I don't know if it's a character, but "Godzilla." I've always been kind of a "Godzilla" guy.



# Recruiting Notebook

## Huskers land 4-star receiver

by Sean Stevens

When he left Lincoln after the Texas Tech game, wide receiver **CURTIS CARTER** (5-foot-10, 161 pounds, 4 stars) of Stonewall, La., North Desoto High School talked about how much he enjoyed his official visit. Carter has been considering Nebraska since the summer but said that he wanted to see some other schools before making his decision.

"I have that one trip planned in December to Missouri, but I don't know if I'm going to hold off that long," Carter said. "Maybe I'll see if I can squeeze in a trip real soon because I really want to compare another visit to this one to see where Nebraska stands as of what I like."

Things change quickly in recruiting, though. This past week Carter became Nebraska's 10th pledge for the 2010 class.

"Honestly, I wanted to do it when I was there," Carter said about his decision. "But I wanted to come home and discuss it with my family. I wanted to really discuss it. I wanted to think about and make sure it's

really what I wanted to do."

A 4-star athlete with explosive speed, Carter said that his talk with Nebraska's receivers coach **TED GILMORE** about his role in the Husker offense helped him make the decision.

"One of the main [things] was when coach Gilmore actually sat down and showed me how they'd use me in the offense," Carter said. "That was big for me. They had to put in time how they would use somebody who hadn't committed yet. I think that was big that they really wanted me at Nebraska."

Carter also has kept in touch with NU quarterback commitment **TYLER GABBERT**. In fact, a conversation with Gabbert pretty much sealed the deal for Carter.

"I said, 'Are you here to stay at Nebraska?' Because I really like him," Carter said. "(Gabbert) said, 'I'm here. If you're here I'm here.' Those were his exact words. 'You're here I'm here.' So I said I'm going to call the coaches later on tonight. I talked to my parents, and they gave me the o.k."

Carter chose Nebraska over offers from Alabama, Missouri and Mississippi State. **N**

## SIDELINES

### BERNARD COMMITS TO ND

Four-star Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., St. Thomas Aquinas running back **GIOVANNI BERNARD** (5-9, 188) made his official visit to Lincoln for the Iowa State game. Efforts to reach Bernard before press time were unsuccessful, but the Sun Sentinel reported that he has since verbally committed to Notre Dame.

### REESE HIGH ON HUSKERS

Though it's been over a month since 4-star receiver **JOSHUA REESE** (6-2, 182) took his official visit to the Nebraska campus, he's still excited about what the Huskers have to offer in a college experience.

"My thoughts changed a lot about Nebraska after going up there," Reese said. "I was really impressed with the fans and how they treat you – the whole environment really. Everything revolves around the football team and I like that."

"Before I went up there, I had some people tell me that they were known for running the football. After visiting and seeing what they are trying to do with their offense – that they're trying to pass more – I see that I could really fit in there. That really boosted them up in my eyes."

Reese, who had logged over 400 yards receiving and five touchdowns through seven games this season, is looking to set up visits to South Florida and West Virginia before making his college decision.

## 2010 Nebraska Commitment List (11)

Name (Rivals.com ranking)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Walker Ashburn ★★★	DE	6-3	245	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)
Curtis Carter ★★★★★	ATH	5-10	161	Stonewall, La. (North De Soto)
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	Moreno Valley, Calif. (Rancho Verde)
Ciante Evans ★★★	CB	5-11	170	Arlington, Texas (Juan Seguin)
Tyler Evans ★★	ATH	6-2	180	Waverly, Neb. (Waverly)
Tyler Gabbert ★★★★★	QB	6-0	190	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Harvey Jackson ★★★	DB	6-2	185	Missouri City, Texas (Hightower)
Mike Moudy ★★★	OL	6-7	291	Castle Rock, Colo. (Douglas County)
Andrew Rodriguez ★★★★★	OT	6-6	300	Aurora, Neb. (Aurora)
Chase Rome ★★★★★	DE	6-3	290	Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge)
Donovan Vestal ★★★	DE	6-5	240	Arlington, Texas (Bowie)

## 2011 Nebraska Commitment List (2)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	290	Clearwater, Fla. (Countryside)
Ryne Reeves	OL	6-3	286	Crete, Neb. (Crete)





## DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

BY JOHN TALMAN  
RECRUITING PUBLISHER,  
HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

# Recruiting, rankings product of research

**WHILE RESEARCHING** for a feature on Nebraska's 1996 recruiting class, I started perusing some old articles.

My purpose was to gather information about what everyone thought of these classes on national letter-of-intent signing day.

What I found were articles dissecting recruiting rankings, many jammed with quotes from analysts defending the rankings.

Keep in mind these pieces were written well before present-day Rivals.com. It was before the 24-7 coverage of recruiting that you see today. It was before recruiting Web sites became recruiting networks, filled with analysts in almost every major college town or talent-filled area in the country.

The quotes centered on the same debates that are all over message boards, sports talk radio shows and publications now. Their focus was to defend or attack the ranking of recruits and of signing classes. So I decided this week to share my thoughts about what's different and what's the same in attaching a number or a star to a potential college football star.

A Sports Illustrated article, published post-signing day in February of 1996 by Tim Layden caught my eye.

He wrote about how the ranking of recruits was "less exact than the science of recruiting itself." He followed this up by accusing nationally recognized "experts" of not evaluating the prospects on their own, but just collecting information on "who's recruiting whom."

In turn, that was how they came up with

their individual prospect and class rankings.

So I looked at Nebraska's team rankings during this era of recruiting coverage.

The 1991 class, which produced many of the players on the 1994 and 1995 title-winning teams was ranked 28th by one publication. The 1995 and 1996 classes were ranked either among the top ten or just outside. Both classes came after national championship wins.

Some said the classes were ranked highly because Nebraska was becoming a better program. Others defended the rankings, saying things such as the Huskers' evaluation were superior in terms of recruiting to their specific system, especially offensively, so they got more than others get out of a collection of talent.

Let's face some facts, though – things have changed in the ranking of recruits.

It doesn't take inside information into recruiting or even 20 minutes of surface-level research to see that the way prospects are evaluated today compared to the mid-90's is vastly different. Obviously, film is now all over the Internet for both analysts and fans to dissect. Analysts spend hours, weeks, and months tweaking rankings as new film, evaluation opportunities and information about prospects surface.

I know. I learned first-hand when I did regional rankings as well.

The major difference is it's a more detailed approach. Not to mention, the numbers of analysts scouring high schools for the next big star has dramatically increased. Evaluation and analysis is held to a higher standard in today's recruiting

coverage.

Having covered recruiting since late 2001, I'm not writing this to say ranking prospects or classes is an exact science. Heck, recruiting by college coaches isn't. You have to feel good about hitting on 60 or 70 percent of your class. That's outstanding. Neither a college coach nor a recruiting analyst can predict future events, such as injuries.

And college coaches have more access to information about such things as academics than a recruiting analyst does. That can affect the chances of a prospect getting into and surviving at a major university.

I don't expect college coaches to scour the Rivals.com rankings each year to know whom to recruit. That's ridiculous. At the end of the day, it's about finding the best player for your system and your program. It's about more than touchdowns, weight room numbers and 40-yard dash times.

You have to recruit well to win. That's just as much about evaluating your needs, as it is about adding talent. Evaluating how well a team filled its needs is something recruiting rankings don't properly do.

Proper evaluation during recruiting in all areas is a must by analysts as much as coaches with the information that is available. If analysts want to be taken seriously, they have to do their homework. Because the expectations and level of criticism has gone up – and recruiting analysts will get the label of "missing" on a prospect just like coaches will. **N**



# Volleyball

TARA MUELLER

BY BOB HAMAR

## Mueller sees role continue to evolve

**R**eplacing Jordan Larson would be a tough task for any volleyball player. The former Nebraska All-American, whom coach John Cook said a year ago might be the greatest player ever at the

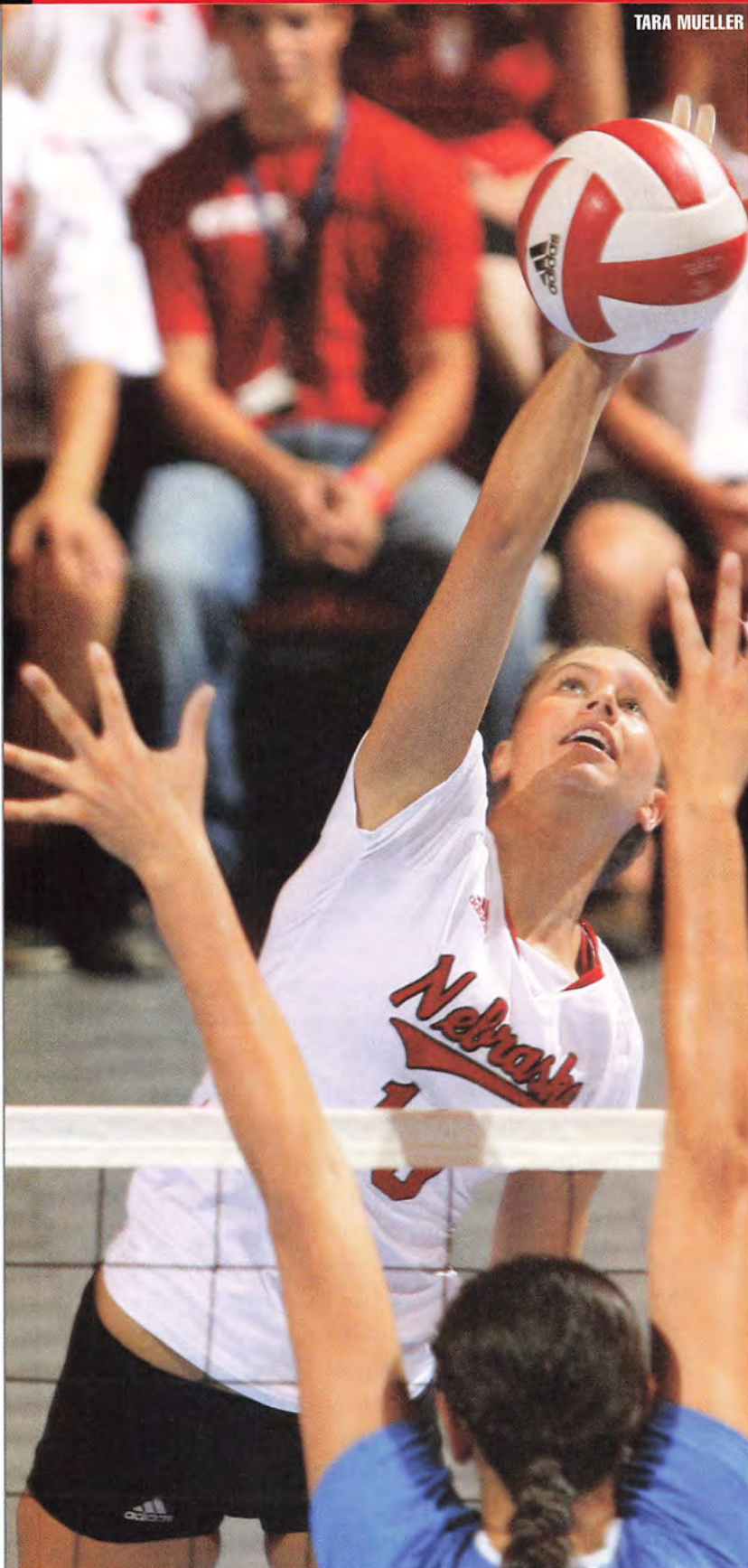
school, left a big void in the Husker team when she completed her eligibility.

Most looked at junior Tara Mueller as Larson's heir apparent, even though Cook and Mueller herself didn't see it that way.

Cook said from the beginning that one player couldn't replace Larson, that it was a team effort. Mueller didn't consider herself the go-to-player, even early this season.

"I don't really see it that I'm the go-to player because all of us, everyone on the team last year and all the new players, have needed to step up and do their own part," Mueller said. "I think that my role is to be a consistent leader and not to allow myself to play with my emotions and then make errors and things like that. That's the main part of my role, and just having fun out there."

There have been some hitting errors this season for Mueller, certainly more than Cook would like to see. That accounts for her lower-





than-expected .185 hitting percentage. Cook said he would prefer to see that percentage up at about .250.

"I've really been looking closely at her kills," Cook said. "She is putting up some numbers. She's getting kills. The problem is she's making errors. Look at her efficiency. It's low. Some of those errors are errors that are chaos, they're way out of system, and she's just putting the ball in the net or hitting it out.

"Last year that was Jordan Larson handling those plays. It's just a matter of her being a little bit smarter, but when we get her in system she's putting the ball away. She just needs to reduce her errors a little bit and realize that you can't kill every ball. Sometimes you just have to keep it in."

Mueller flashed her potential early this season when she had 14 kills on .583 hitting in a 3-0 sweep of Virginia. The Cavaliers are coached by former Nebraska assistant Lee Maes who recruited Mueller to NU.

Maes was certainly impressed with what he saw from Mueller that night.

"I've seen Tara grow so much," Maes said. "I coached her when she was 13-years-old on the USA Program. I had a chance to recruit her here to Nebraska, knowing she was a wonderful athlete who had an incredible skill set.

"One significant thing that was really evident was the type of range she has as an attacker now. Her ability to be able to hit every single shot in the book makes her very difficult to defend."

Cook did change Mueller's role during the season when he switched her with freshman Hannah Werth. It was one of those subtle changes that most people wouldn't even notice, but it was a big change from a volleyball standpoint.

It meant that Mueller was now going to be passing in all six rotations, just like Larson did a year ago.

"It's increased her load, but our passing numbers are up from after we made the switch," Cook said. "If you can't serve and pass, you're not going to be in the game no matter what you're doing. So it's been an adjustment for Tara because she has an increased role from last year. I think she's growing into it and we're seeing her play better and better."

But the Huskers still haven't really found a way to replace Larson.

"With losing Jordan and all the new players we were getting, (Cook) talked about how everyone has their own role and everyone needs to step up and help fill because one person can't fill that role," Mueller said. "Everyone as individuals needs to step up their game so we can fill it as a team."

## HUSKERS ALTER PLANS

Nebraska usually plays a Wednesday/Saturday Big 12 schedule. That changed when they went to face Texas Tech and Texas on Oct. 28 and Oct. 30

That Wednesday/Friday schedule developed because Texas officials were worried that they couldn't draw much of a crowd on Halloween night. Cook wasn't crazy about the change in routine, but it did save the program over \$20,000.

"It sends a message that hey, we're willing to make some sacrifices here," Cook said. "We sent a letter to the professors here explaining why we're doing this because I really don't like taking the players out of school for three days. That's the only negative to it, but we're also laying people off so I think it sends a message that we're doing everything we can to save some money."

## ROAD WARRIORS

The Huskers have had some problems playing in Nebraska. They lost to Michigan at the Qwest Center in Omaha, UCLA at the Bob Devaney Center in Lincoln, and Texas and Iowa State at the NU Coliseum.

Cook said it reminds him of 2003 when the Huskers lost back-to-back matches to Kansas State and Missouri at the Coliseum and ended the season with a 28-5 record. Four of those five losses came at home.

"It takes me back to 2003," Cook said. "It's the same things. We kept losing matches at home and then go smoke teams on the road. That's what I'm comparing it to." **N**

### 2009 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	Red/White Scrimmage, 7 p.m.
Aug. 28-29	Runza/AVCA Showcase
Aug. 28	*vs. Michigan, L, 3-0
Aug. 29	*vs. Minnesota, W, 3-2
Sept. 1	Creighton, W, 3-0
Sept. 4-5	at LSU Tournament
Sept. 4	vs. UL-Lafayette, W, 3-0
	at LSU, W, 3-2
Sept. 5	vs. Tulane, W, 3-0
Sept. 10-13	Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 10	Virginia, W, 3-0
Sept. 11	BYU, W, 3-1
Sept. 13	^UCLA, L, 3-2
Sept. 16	Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Sept. 19	at Colorado, W, 3-0
Sept. 23	at Texas A&M, L, 3-2
Sept. 30	at Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 7	Kansas, W, 3-0
Oct. 10	Kansas State, W, 3-0
Oct. 14	at Baylor, W, 3-0
Oct. 17	at Missouri, W, 3-1
Oct. 21	Iowa State, L, 3-2
Oct. 24	Oklahoma, W, 3-1
Oct. 28	at Texas Tech, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 30	at Texas, W, 3-0
Nov. 4	Missouri, 7 p.m.
Nov. 7	at Iowa State, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 13	Texas A&M, 7 p.m.
Nov. 18	Baylor, 7 p.m.
Nov. 21	at Kansas, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Kansas State, 7 p.m.
Nov. 28	Colorado, 7 p.m.
Dec. 4-5	NCAA 1st/2nd Rounds, TBA
Dec. 11-12	*NCAA Regionals, TBA
Dec. 17	NCAA Semifinals, Finals
	* at Qwest Center, Omaha
	^ at Bob Devaney Sports Center



# Basketball

RAY GALLEGOS

BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL

## Long wait for Diaz nearly over

**B**rian Diaz waited for months at his home in Puerto Rico, not knowing when or if he'd be cleared to join the Nebraska men's basketball team.

When Diaz learned he'd finally met the school's foreign language requirements to gain admission, Nebraska rushed to get him to Lincoln.

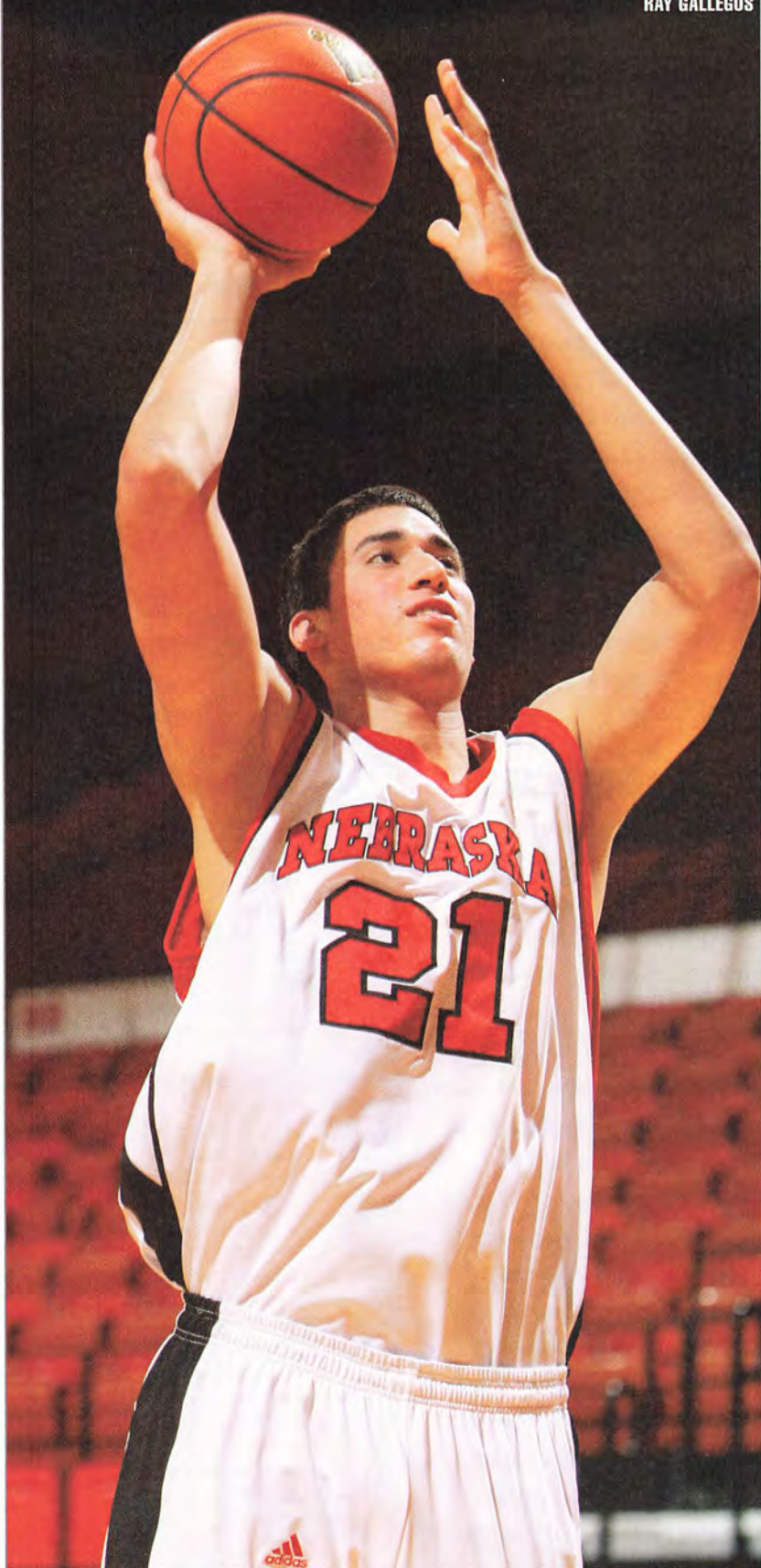
Diaz arrived mid-season, on a cold January night. Only a couple of hours later, he walked into the Devaney Center during Nebraska's game with Kansas State.

The big question asked of coach Doc Sadler after that game – a lopsided Nebraska victory – was whether Diaz would play the upcoming weekend against No. 5 Oklahoma and the Big 12 Conference's top player, Blake Griffin.

Remember, Nebraska had the nation's shortest Division I basketball team, and Diaz stands 6-foot-11.

So consider that pressure for a 19-year-old who'd just arrived with nothing but a backpack and a duffel bag, and hadn't yet met most of his teammates.

"It was hard because I wanted to play,"





Diaz said, "but at the same time everybody was giving me the advice of redshirting because I was coming to a hard conference, all of that stuff. It was big, high-level basketball."

Diaz traveled to Norman, Okla., but didn't play, then decided the next week to sit the remainder of the season as a redshirt. Now, as Nebraska prepares for a new season, Diaz is certain he made the right call.

"I can help them more now," he said, "than I could in January."

Sadler won't argue, although he believes Diaz could've helped immediately.

The fourth-year coach said he still wakes up in the middle of the night, recalling a last-second loss to Texas A&M and an overtime loss to Oklahoma State last season. Win those games, he said, and Nebraska is in the NCAA Tournament, rather than the National Invitation Tournament.

Diaz could've made a difference in those games, Sadler said, although the coach admits now it's nice to have a 6-11 player with international experience on the roster for four more years.

"He is really, really skilled with his back to the basket," Sadler said. "His right-handed, left-handed little swing shot, all that, his hands are terrific. But the thing he can do that a lot of guys can't do is shoot the basketball."

Diaz grew up in Caguas, Puerto Rico and played high school basketball at Colegio Bautista de Caguas. He averaged 17 points, 10 rebounds and three blocked shots in 2007-08. He also played on the Puerto Rican Under-19

National Team and played in Serbia in 2007, where the Nebraska coaching staff first saw him.

"I think I'm the type of player who can do a little bit of everything," Diaz said. "I can score down low, hit some mid-range jump shots, get some rebounds, block some shots, make good passes. I just do a little bit of everything in the game."

Diaz said among his biggest adjustments on the court was getting used to the speed of the game.

"It's a lot faster than I used to play," he said. "That's a big part I have to improve — play hard all the time, not just part of the game."

Off the court, Diaz admits he's struggled with homesickness, particularly when he first returns from a trip home. He last visited his home in August.

Sadler said Diaz is a quiet but well-liked person who has slowly adjusted to a different culture. Among the concerns Sadler first had were with Diaz's diet.

"I think he's adjusted a little bit to the food," Sadler said. "The food was really difficult to eat when he first got here. He lost weight. But he's adjusted somewhat to that."

Diaz, in addition to straightening out his diet, worked in the weight room in the off-season and has gained 14 pounds to weigh 235.

"Everything's going pretty well," Diaz said. "I'm getting in good shape and practicing with the team, getting good chemistry."

"I think everything's pretty good right now. They'll be able to have a better player for four years."

## NU MEN PICKED 11TH, WOMEN SIXTH

Big 12 coaches couldn't help but notice that Nebraska will have 11 players this season who've never played in a Husker uniform.

At least, that's a probable explanation for why they picked Nebraska to finish 11th in the league in a pre-season poll. The Huskers were behind No. 9 Texas Tech, No. 10 Baylor and ahead of No. 12 Colorado.

Kansas, likely the No. 1 team in the pre-season Associated Press poll, was a unanimous pick to win the Big 12.

In the women's coaches' poll, Nebraska was picked sixth overall and second among teams from the North Division. Connie Yori's team returns five starters — six including Kelsey Griffin, who started two years ago but redshirted last season because of an injury. A 6-foot-2 senior forward, Griffin was picked to the All-Big 12 pre-season team.

Baylor was picked to finish first in the women's poll.

## MCCRAY CLEARED

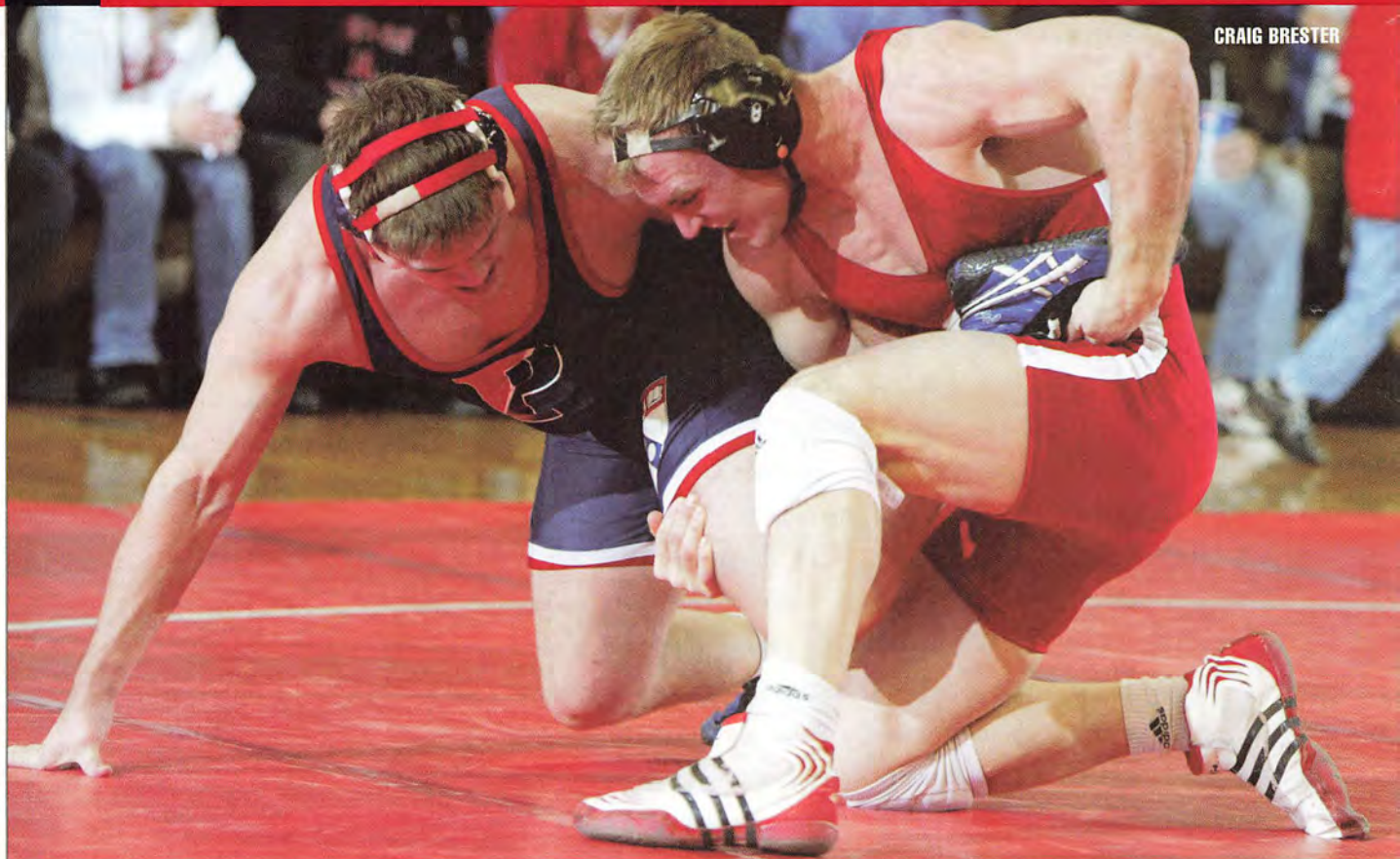
Sophomore Toney McCray, who tore a ligament in his left (non-shooting) elbow in September, was cleared to go full-speed when Nebraska began practice on Oct. 16.

McCray, though, is wearing a brace and can't fully extend his elbow. Sadler said full extension should come by the time the season begins.

"We'll just see how it goes. That's probably going to be a day-to-day issue all year," Sadler said. "He can't hurt his elbow any worse. It's just got to get stronger and stronger." **N**



# Around the Horn



CRAIG BRESTER

## WRESTLING Brester hoping for storybook ending to career

BY TOMMY DAHLK

**S**ince the NCAA Wrestling Championships are at the Qwest Center in Omaha (March 18-20), Husker senior Craig Brester, a Howells, Neb., native, will have a chance to finish off his career in storybook fashion.

Well, it will be the perfect ending as long as he wins the 197-pound NCAA title.

"It's my last run at it," Brester said. "Nationals will be here in my home state, so I've got to throw everything out there I've got."

Getting the chance to win a championship in front of friends and family is motivation for Brester, but the fact he's come so close to winning it all drives him even more.

In 2008, Brester earned All-America status with a fourth-place showing at the NCAA Championships.

Then last year, he came even closer. He entered the tournament as the No. 1 seed after taking home Outstanding Wrestler Honors at the Big 12 championships.

At the nationals, however, after cruising to the finals, he lost to Iowa State's Jake Varner, whom he defeated in the Big 12 championship match, 2-1.



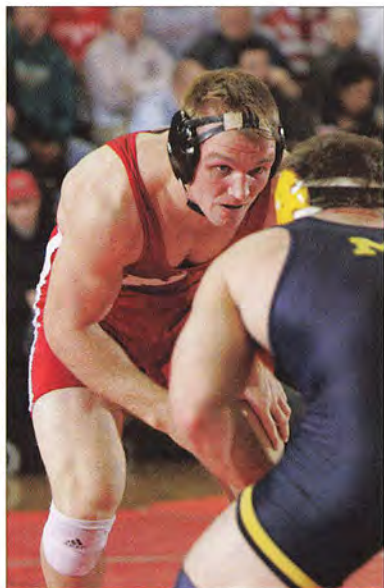
After the second-place showing, Brester has done some tweaking.

"I'm just working on moving my feet and not getting tied up and stuck in a pushing match," he said. "I am just working on being more relentless and making stuff happen even more so I can score more points so it doesn't come down to 2-1 or anything like that. The more points I get, the better off I am."

To make his possible storybook ending even more complete, Brester might get another opportunity to avenge last year's loss. Varner returns and the two might square off a couple of times before a possible meeting in Omaha in mid-March.

Although he and the Huskers should have plenty of motivation heading into the NCAA Championships, anyway, Brester said it doesn't hurt to have a rival from Ames, Iowa, back again this season.

"It's a great challenge to have someone that caliber in your weight class," he said. "It really gives you someone to push you to be the best you can be." **N**



# HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED TEAMSTORE



**SHOPHUSKERSILLUSTRATED.NET**





**DOWN IN THE DUMPS** - As it turned out, Nebraska probably would have been the 1981 national champion had it won the Orange Bowl game against Clemson on the night of Jan. 1, 1982. The Tigers went into the game ranked No. 1. Nebraska was No. 4, behind Georgia and Alabama. But Georgia lost to Pittsburgh in the Sugar Bowl and Alabama lost to Texas in the Cotton Bowl, clearing the way for the Cornhuskers. Nebraska trailed 22-7 going into the fourth quarter but with 7:49 remaining had a first-and-10 at its own 37-yard line with a chance to tie had it scored a touchdown. The final score was 22-15. Junior offensive guard **MIKE MANDELKO** (pictured here) earned second-team All-Big Eight recognition in 1981 and consensus first-team honors the next season, one of three seniors in the Cornhusker offensive line to be so honored in 1982. The others were center **DAVE RIMINGTON** and tackle **RANDY THEISS**. Junior guard **DEAN STEINKUHLER** and senior tackle **JEFF KWAPICK** also started in 1982 on a line that ranks among the best in school history, along with those of the mid-1990s.

## GAMES REMEMBERED

Nov. 25, 1965 • at Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, NE



One sports writer noted that during the first half, anyway, the only people in Nebraska scarlet and cream who could hold onto anything were the pom-pom girls and the baton twirler, "Golden Girl" Susie Kunc. The Cornhuskers lost three fumbles, two of which set up Oklahoma's points. (Nebraska didn't know what turnover problems were back then. See

Iowa State 2009.)

Even after fullback **CHARLIE WINTERS**, whose nickname was "Choo Choo," turned a fourth-and-2 carry into a touchdown, there was concern Oklahoma would do what it had done the year before at Norman, Okla., and dash Nebraska's hopes of its first unbeaten regular season since 1915.

But the Sooners had no answer for Husker halfback **HARRY WILSON** (pictured), who rushed for 160 yards and two touchdowns, and without the help of more turnovers in the second half, they were no match for Nebraska's defense, already referred to in newspaper accounts as the "Black Shirts."

Linebacker **LYNN SENKBEIL** and middle guard **WAYNE MEYLAN** led them with 14 tackles each.

Afterward, trainer **PAUL SCHNEIDER** was the first to be tossed in the showers by the jubilant Huskers. Coach **BOB DEVANEY** and his assistants soon followed, as did sports information director Don Bryant.

**BOB DEVANEY (AS REPORTED IN THE LINCOLN STAR):**

### Nebraska 21, Oklahoma 9

Oklahoma	3	6	0	0	—	9
Nebraska	0	7	14	0	—	21

- (O) Ron Shotts 13 field goal
- (O) Larry Brown 3 run (kick failed)
- (N) Charlie Winters 29 run (Larry Wachholtz kick)
- (N) Harry Wilson 66 run (Wachholtz kick)
- (N) Wilson 38 pass Bob Churchich (Wachholtz kick)

Attendance: 52,533

"I think it's harder to win 10 when everyone says you can do it than when you can sneak up on it. Pressure has perhaps built up over the last two games, and our passing game has been affected by it."

### DO YOU REMEMBER?

- ▶ NBC televised the Thanksgiving Day game in color.
- ▶ Nebraska had already accepted an Orange Bowl bid. Some questioned Devaney for not accepting a Cotton Bowl bid instead. The Cornhuskers would have played Southwest Conference champ Arkansas in the Cotton Bowl game. The Razorbacks were No. 2 in both the AP and UPI polls the week of the game; Nebraska was No. 3.
- ▶ Michigan State was 10-0 and ranked No. 1 in both polls. Ivy League schools Dartmouth and Princeton were among those receiving votes in the AP media poll.
- ▶ Nebraska would lose to Alabama in the Orange Bowl, 39-28, and finish fifth in the AP poll, while the Crimson Tide would climb to No. 1 after Michigan State and Arkansas lost bowl games. The final UPI poll was released before the bowl games.
- ▶ Oklahoma had two offensive line starters who were listed at less than 6-feet tall. Both were guards, Wes Butts (5-10) and Bob Vardeman (5-8).



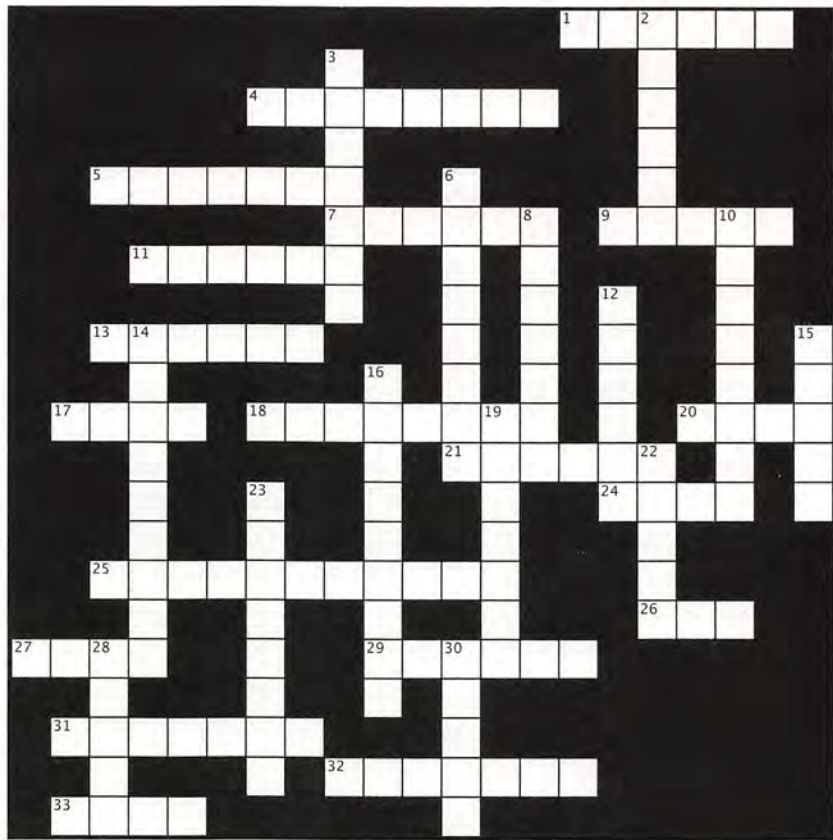
# CROSSWORD & TRIVIA

## ACROSS

1. Wears No. 48
4. Backup defensive end
5. 1997 Lombardi Award winner
7. Oklahoma head coach
9. Ex-Husker cornerback now with Arizona Cardinals
11. Backup center
13. Quarterbacks coach
17. Leading receiver vs. Iowa State
18. Oklahoma offense under Barry Switzer
20. Wears No. 28
21. Oklahoma campus location
24. Oklahoma Heisman Trophy winner (1978)
25. Nov. 21 opponent
26. Blocked 2 kicks vs. Iowa State
27. Bob Stoops' alma mater
29. 1997 Outland Trophy winner
31. Leading tackler vs. Iowa State
32. Oklahoma nickname
33. Running backs coach

## DOWN

2. 1972 Outland Trophy winner
3. Oklahoma school color
6. Leading rusher vs. Iowa State
8. Coached Oklahoma to 3 national championships
10. Ex-Husker linebacker now with Kansas City Chiefs
12. Nov. 14 opponent
14. Wears No. 21
15. Number of NU turnovers vs. Iowa State
16. Bo Pelini's alma mater
19. Former NU assistant on OU staff
22. Ex-Husker offensive lineman now with New Orleans Saints
23. Injured Oklahoma quarterback
28. Oklahoma Heisman Trophy winner (2003)
30. Wears No. 49



Answers will appear in the Nov. 14 issue

## HUSKERNUTZ



HUSKERNUTZ GO ONLINE IN JUNE TO RESERVE A PARKING PLACE FOR THE NOV. 7 OKLAHOMA GAME.

## HAVE IDEAS?

Do you have some inspiration for a HuskerNutz cartoon? If we use your idea, we'll give you credit and send you and autographed full-color print of your HuskerNutz cartoon!

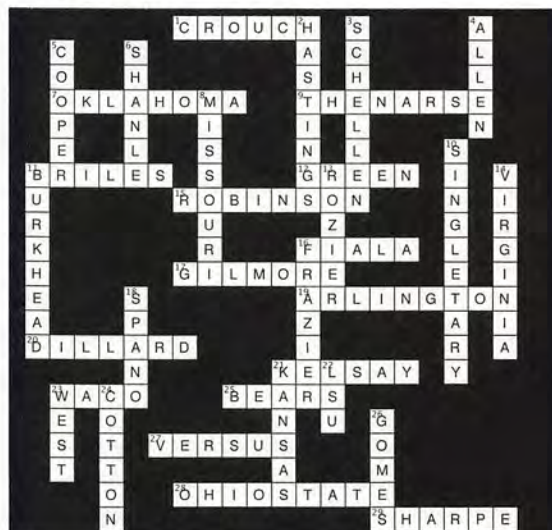
SEND IDEAS TO: Paul Fell Cartoons,

3215 Jamestown Lane, Lincoln, NE 68516

or email to: pfell@neb.rr.com



## OCT. 31 CROSSWORD SOLUTION







## THE FINAL WORD

BY MIKE BABCOCK

# Crick's monster game punishes Baylor

**WHEN JARED CRICK** left the Nebraska locker room, one of the last to leave, he was stopped by his position coach, defensive coordinator Carl Pelini, for a hug and a slap on the back.

Later, after speaking briefly with reporters, Crick returned the respect, describing Pelini and defensive ends coach John Papuchis as outstanding teachers. In fact, the sophomore defensive tackle said, if Pelini and Papuchis were teaching his university classes, "I'd have straight A's."

Crick was a nightmare in a No. 94 jersey for Baylor on a pleasant Halloween afternoon in Waco, Texas – though you might not have known the location had you suddenly awakened inside Floyd Casey Stadium because the announced crowd of 31,702 appeared to be half Cornhusker red.

Some 25 to 30 of those were Crick's family and friends. And he put on a show for them.

"He had a monster game," said Pelini, who's not one for exaggeration.

And though numbers don't always tell the story, they did in this case. Crick was credited with 13 tackles, 10 of them unassisted and 6.5 of them for losses totaling 28 yards.

He also sacked Baylor quarterback Nick Florence five times, breaking the school single-game record of four, previously held by five players, most recently Mike Rucker in 1996.

Oh yes, Crick had a fumble recovery, too, just for good measure.

So who's the All-America candidate in the defensive line, the semifinalist for the Lombardi Award, the Outland Trophy

candidate and the guy being mentioned for the Heisman earlier in the season? Ndamukong Suh, of course, and with unquestioned justification.

Suh is a beast, figuratively speaking. And as Pelini has said from the beginning of the season, "if teams want to turn their center to Suh and double (team) him, Crick's going to make 'em pay."

"He's really taken advantage of that," Pelini said.

"You can't single-block the guy (Crick) all day and expect he won't be in your backfield. As long as we have that threat (Suh) on the other side, it's a great tandem to have."

Like Scylla and Charybdis in Greek Mythology, Suh and Crick make navigating through Nebraska's defense treacherous, leaving opposing offenses stuck between a rock and a hard place.

But there's more than those two, said Pelini. When Suh is double-teamed and Crick doesn't make someone pay, "it's Barry (Turner) or Pierre (Allen). We've got four guys up there who are threats, and Baker (Steinkuhler) and Cameron (Meredith) off the bench. We're solid up there."

If not for that, Nebraska might not have escaped Floyd Casey Stadium with a fifth victory. A sequence early in the fourth quarter, in particular, illustrated the point.

The Cornhuskers were protecting a 20-10 lead, with the offense sputtering, when Crick recovered one of two Baylor fumbles at the Bears' 23-yard line. On the first play from scrimmage, Nebraska quarterback Cody Green fumbled, and Baylor recovered at the 28-yard line.

The Bears drove to the Nebraska

7-yard line but couldn't get any farther. On fourth-and-7, Ben Parks attempted a 29-yard field goal, which sailed wide to the left.

"How important was it? It was important enough that if we let 'em in there (the end zone), we're an onside kick and a field goal away from a tie," Pelini said.

Crick made solo tackles on the second and third plays of the series and later was knocked off his feet during a 6-yard run on the play before the field goal attempt.

He had to be helped from the field but returned on the Bears' next possession, just over 2 minutes later, to sack Florence for the record-breaking fifth time, evidence of his toughness.

"There was a little bit of vengeance in that," Crick said.

The hot topic among Cornhusker fans during the week leading up to the game was whether Green or junior Zac Lee would start at quarterback. Green, who is from Dayton, Texas (about a three-hour drive from Waco), got the start in front of a large contingent of family and friends.

But the story afterward was Crick, that other defensive tackle.

"I really can't take any credit," said Crick. "It's us front guys just doing work."

As for the school record, he was "honored, really honored," Crick said. But "it could have been anybody today get all of those sacks. So it's a group effort."

Florence must have thought there were multiple players in No. 94 jerseys. Because whenever he dropped back to pass, there was a No. 94 bearing down on him.

Crick was just doing his best to earn straight A's – or straight S's, as in sacks. **N**



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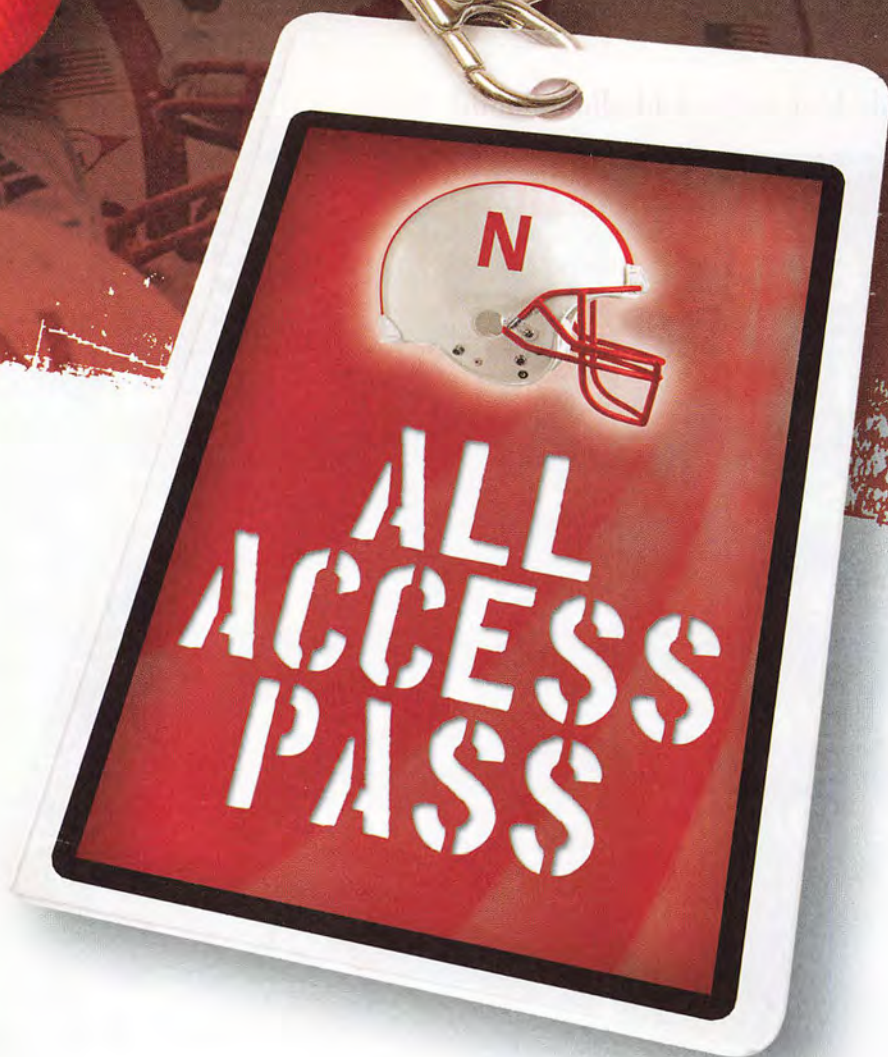
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#### 2009 Nebraska Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Results
Sat, Sep 05	Florida Atlantic	Memorial Stadium	W, 49-3
Sat, Sep 12	Arkansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 38-9
Sat, Sep 19	at Virginia Tech	at Blacksburg, VA	L, 15-16
Sat, Sep 26	Louisiana-Lafayette	Memorial Stadium	W, 55-0
Thu, Oct 08	at Missouri *	at Columbia, MO	W, 27-12
Sat, Oct 17	Texas Tech *	Memorial Stadium	L, 10-31
Sat, Oct 24	Iowa State *	Memorial Stadium	L, 7-9
Sat, Oct 31	at Baylor *	at Waco, TX	W, 20-10
Sat, Nov 07	Oklahoma *	Memorial Stadium	TBA
Sat, Nov 14	at Kansas *	at Lawrence, KS	TBA
Sat, Nov 21	Kansas State *	Memorial Stadium	TBA
Fri, Nov 27	at Colorado *	at Boulder, CO	2:30 p.m., ABC
Sat, Dec 5	Big 12 Championship	Arlington, TX <small>(Dallas Cowboys New Stadium)</small>	7 p.m., ABC

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